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"BRAVE FELLOW! AHoy! THERE IS LADY LUCILLE TO YOUR PORT," SHOUTED
CAPTAIN BURNETT.

OR, The True Hearts of '76.

An Afloat and Ashore Romance of
Revolutionary Days.

BY COL. PRENTISS INGRAHAM,
AUTHOR OF "MERLE, THE MUTINEER,"
"MONTEZUMA, THE MERCILESS,"
ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I. THE SAILOR'S LEAP.

A CENTURY that has passed since the thunders of a cruel war between the Colonies and Great Britain, has not crumbled into ruin a stately old stone mansion still standing upon a bold headland of the Massachusetts Coast.

Then it was the house of an English officer of high rank, who had married an American beauty whose inheritance it became with the death of her parents, and when the war of "seventy-six" was waging, the grand old mansion, with its thousands of acres, stately elms surrounding, and an unsurpassed view of ocean, coast and

beyond the line that would drive it upon the rocks, and the cheer from the group of officers upon the towering cliff was answered by the two crews of the life-boats, and, heard on the decks of the sloop-of-war and coast cruiser in the haven, was taken up and answered with a roar that rose above the howling winds and thundering surf.

That those on the spar now knew that they were safe was proven by Lucille waving her hand, and seeing them now, the officers of the two life-boats were urging their separate crews to be the first in the race for life.

CHAPTER III. SELF-SACRIFICE.

THE life-boat from the coast cruiser was the smallest of the two, and had but six oarsmen to the sloop-of-war's eight, and its size was against it in the wild sea.

But, then, the crew knew that their gallant young captain was in danger, and they were a well-trained lot of men, great brawny seamen with muscles of steel, and there was a determination in their hearts to win by being first alongside the wreckage.

It had been an even and a hard race thus far, out of the haven through the entrance into the wild waves, and the storm that was raging was constantly threatening to be more terrible in its fury.

Then, too, the officers who held the tillers of the boats, were both admirers of Lucille, while for them, at the risk of their lives, as they were doing, to save her, a captain in the army, and Captain Burnett of the Royal Navy, was sure promotion, and perhaps a medal.

So the incentive was with all to strain every nerve, and the tossing, writhing, reeling, plunging life-boats forged ahead in the very teeth of the storm, and in defiance of the increasing tempest.

Those on the cliff breathlessly watched their progress, for they knew that the increasing storm might yet prevent the boats from reaching the spar before it was driven into the breakers, and then would the youth, even upon the sandy shore, be unable to rescue one or both of those he was struggling so manfully to save.

Would not his strength soon give out?

So on, on went the boats, and at last they drew near the wreckage. Quickly the rescuer released Lucille from the halyard, and in an instant more was near enough to the coast cruiser's life-boat to have the officer in the stern draw Lucille on board.

"Don't go nearer, or that spout will sink you!" the swimmer called out; and once more he made the trip, and this time to take Captain Burnett to the larger boat, for the other was already pulling away with all speed for the haven, while cheer after cheer came from those on the cliff!

"You are a wonder, my splendid fellow, and Godfrey Burnett owes you his life," said the captain, as the stern of the life-boat was near them.

"Be careful, sir, for his arm is broken," called out the rescuer, in a commanding voice, as the officer bent over to grasp Captain Burnett.

Then quickly came the order:

"In with him, quick, for here comes the wreckage down upon you!" and as he saw that the hold upon the captain was firm, he shouted:

"Give way, men, for your lives, and never mind me!"

The crew obeyed the command, and the boat shot away just as Captain Burnett was drawn by the lieutenant in charge and the coxswain over the stern.

And not a moment too soon, as the mass of wreckage, borne on a tremendous wave, would have been dashed upon the boat and been its destruction.

"Great God! he is lost!" cried Captain Burnett, as he saw the youth disappear almost beneath the wreckage.

"It was a close call for us, sir, and his command saved us," the lieutenant responded, and he turned his eyes over the waters for some view of the bold swimmer.

Far away he rose, and landward, and sharply came the voice:

"Ahoy, the life-boat!"

"Ay, ay, we will bear down to you!"

"No, pull for the haven and pull for life, for, see yonder. I can take care of myself!" and the rescuer at once started landward upon the driving waves.

His warning however, was heeded, and feeling that the boat would be lost if once it pulled beyond the entrance to the haven to his rescue, the lieutenant gave the order and it headed for the inlet, which the other life-boat was now nearing.

And louder howled the winds, louder because the roar of the waters and the tempest, at its height now, was coming down from seaward, so that it became a race for life with the two boats.

Those on the cliff saw it all, and they saw, too, the brave rescuer of others going shoreward with the towering seas.

Would he reach the beach in safety? was the query upon every lip.

They saw the boats, first the coast-cruiser, then the sloop-of-war in its wake a dozen lengths

away, dash into the turbulent waters of the inlet, and heard the wild cheers from the vessels' decks as the crews caught sight of them.

Then the cedar-clad point shut them from view, and all eyes turned upon the man who had saved others, but refused aid for himself.

Swiftly borne landward, he must soon reach the shore, and in silence they watched him as he drove along.

"He has not lost his nerve," said a colonel of cavalry.

"No, nothing daunts him, and see how coolly he rides the waves.

"Sir George, the brave fellow will win in the game he is playing with death!" said Admiral Chauncey.

But General Harwood had already gone, slipped away to the shore of the haven to meet the boats, and after a loud, ringing cheer that was heard on the vessels in the harbor, the others followed, for that cheer told them the rescuer had been hurled upon the sands, arose staggering but determined, and running beyond danger, had fallen exhausted from his herculean efforts.

As the life-boats reached the shore they were met by Sir George, and his guests soon arrived and welcomed the maiden and the officer, who were hastily aided to the mansion, for the general insisted that Captain Burnett should be his guest, and his surgeon was sent for to come to Elm Haven and look to his commander's injuries, while the surgeon of the sloop-of-war was also ordered ashore to aid him, as it was feared that the shock might cause Lucille to be ill.

Hastening to the mansion to escape the fury of the storm, all seemed to have forgotten the brave rescuer until Lucille cried:

"Where is that noble young man, Conrad, for we owe our lives to him?"

"I will send my servants, Lucille, to—"

"No, father, servants are not the ones to send.

"There are young officers here whose admiration for courage should cause them to go to the aid of a man who offered himself as a sacrifice for others.

"The cheers from the cliff told us that he had, however, landed in safety."

The words were well uttered, and their force struck several young officers, who at once dashed away along the shore to where the youth had been seen to land by those on the cliff.

CHAPTER IV. THE HERO.

WHEN the three young officers, who had dashed away at the words of Lucille Harwood, arrived upon the sandy shore, they found there the body of the ill-fated Captain Moore, the commandant of the fort on the hill above Elm Haven Mansion.

His red uniform was torn, and his face was scarred, by being dashed against the rocks; but he had been laid upon his back, his hands folded upon his broad breast, showing that some one had drawn him from the waves and with reverence for the dead placed him in that position.

"It could only be that daring young sailor," cried one of the officers, while another answered:

"Yes, but where is he?"

This query none of the three could answer, and they stood in silence glancing about them, when a small piece of rock dropped near them.

Instantly they glanced upward, and, brave men though they were, they started at what they beheld.

Just above them towered the cliff at its highest and most rugged point; and it rose into the air over a hundred feet.

And there, clinging like a bat to the rocks, they beheld the form of a man, seventy feet from the ground, some forty from the top.

It was the young sailor, and he was slowly making his way up the rugged face of the cliff to the summit above, which was not far from where he had taken his grand leap, and where he had left his jacket, hat and shoes.

"My God! the man cares nothing for life," cried Lieutenant Paul Pearley, of the sloop-of-war Venture, then lying in the haven.

"He is mad to undertake a chance so desperate," added Lieutenant Jules Girard.

The third officer was a lieutenant, in command of a detachment of hussars stationed as scouts at the fort on the hill, and he had been under the command of Captain Lucas Moore, who lay dead not ten feet away.

He had liked the artillery officer greatly, and stood silently regarding his dead form, when the words of his companions brought him to a realization of the danger of the gallant youth who had already made himself trebly a hero within the last hour.

"Great God! can nothing be done for the brave lad?" cried the hussar, Ethan Enders, glancing up at the slowly-moving form upon the cliff.

"Yes, we can lower ropes from the top of the cliff and draw him up," responded Paul Pearley, and raising his voice he called out:

"Ho aloft there, lad!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" was the response.

"Cling where you are, my lad, and we will run up to the mansion for ropes and lower them over to your aid," shouted the naval officer from the beach.

"Thank you, sir, but I do not need your aid; I will reach the cliff," was the cool reply.

But the officers realized that the task was a terrible one, for the cliff above the climber seemed to be devoid of footholes, while to retrace his way would be utterly impossible.

So they started off at a run and arriving almost breathless upon the plateau where the path came out near the mansion, quickly reported the situation.

"The boy is a fool," said Sir George Harwood; but he hastily called his servants and ordered ropes to be gotten, while, with the admiral and his guests, he hastened toward the cliff, a thousand feet away.

Lady Lucille had gone to her room with the housekeeper and her maid, to change her wet clothes, and Captain Godfrey Burnett had retired to a guest's chamber in the mansion, and was in the hands of the two surgeons of the vessels-of-war.

Soon Lieutenant Jules Girard hastily sent an officer from the fort, to have the body of the dead captain taken to his quarters, and then hurried on after the crowd toward the cliff.

As they neared the spot they all dreaded finding that the bold young sailor had become exhausted and fallen back into the sea.

But glancing over they beheld him, not in the same position, but some distance away, making his perilous way toward the point of the cliff.

"Hold hard, my brave fellow, for ropes will soon be here," called out Sir George.

All saw him glance coolly upward and take in the situation.

Then came his reply, and it seemed in a defiant tone:

"Thank you, General Sir George, but I do not need your aid, for, though I cannot go down the cliff as I came, I can make my way around the point, and if I cannot gain the top, why I can spring back into the sea again."

"Fool! madman, what do you mean?" cried Sir George, angrily, stung at the refusal of his assistance from a fisher-lad.

"Just what I say, Sir George.

"I climbed up this cliff to the top, years ago when a boy, but since then the rains have worn the rock so that I cannot get foot and hand-hold above.

"I can then spring back into the sea, for I decline your aid with thanks."

All wondered at the youth's strange words, for all that he said reached them distinctly.

And all were gazing over at his dangerous, daring progress, while every eye on the two ships was turned upon him in wondering awe at his recklessness.

"My brave boy, this is madness, so remain where you are, and we will soon give you a hand.

"Sir George, hasten them on with the ropes, I beg of you," said Admiral Chauncey.

The tone of the youth changed, and glancing up he was seen to coolly salute the admiral, while he replied promptly:

"Thank you, sir; but as I got myself into this scrape by my foolhardiness, I beg you will let me get out of it in my own way."

"The lad is a hero, and talks like one born a gentleman," the admiral responded, and then it was seen that the youth was hastening along the face of the cliff toward the point.

Beneath him was a rocky shore, but forty feet away was the cliff point, and there was deep water, the waves breaking wildly against the wall of rocks.

Still, he had plunged from the dizzy height a short while before, and into the surging waters, and he might do so again with safety.

Then he could swim, if his strength was not exhausted, toward the shore where he had before landed, a couple of hundred yards away.

Such was evidently his endeavor, and by every obstacle he could clutch hold of with feet and hands, he was making his way toward the cliff point, which, as I have before said, jutted like a huge prow of a giant vessel cut into the ocean, a short ways back a sandy beach upon one side, toward the haven, upon the other a perpendicular wall of rock for a mile to an inlet between rocky highlands.

"Ho, with those ropes! Come, you lazy fellows, come!" shouted the admiral, as the servants appeared, bring a long ladder and ropes, and certainly taking their time.

"I will go over, sir, and make a rope fast to him," said Lieutenant Ethan Enders, the dashing and handsome young hussar.

"You are a soldier, Enders, and it requires the cool head of a sailor for the work," responded the admiral, and as he glanced around upon the group of officers Lieutenant Jules Girard of the Sea Fox, Captain Burnett's schooner, stepped forward and said:

"I am ready, sir."

"And I," added Lieutenant Paul Pearley, of the admiral's staff.

As though realizing, or hearing what was going on above him, and determined that he would not owe his escape to those who sought

disappear down the pathway by which he had come to the mansion.

"A strange fellow that, proud as a noble, and with the courtly manners of a cavalier, while he has the grit of a dozen men," said Lord Chauncey, gazing after him.

"Yes, he is proud, and as poor as my humblest servant.

"It is just such false pride with these Americans that are causing these disturbances we are having, my lord," remarked Sir George.

"You seem to feel some grudge against him, Sir George. But who is he?"

Sir George glanced at his daughter and said: "I did have a grudge against him, but it is over now.

"The truth is, my lord, the boy's ancestors, I believe, once owned Elm Haven and all the land about here; but fast living ruined them, and all that his mother now has is about forty acres at the head of the inlet, and which she has refused to sell to me, though I have offered treble its value.

"My agent, knowing I wanted it, tried persecution, I believe, to drive them out, but got soundly thrashed for it by the youth, who is a perfect giant in strength, slender as he appears.

"I have never heard any harm of the lad, other than that he puts on the airs of a gentleman."

"But you have heard much that was good, father, for he has supported his mother for years, young as he is, while he is considered the best sailor on the coast, and, by his many daring rescues of people from death, has won the name of the Boy Life-Saver," and Lady Lucille spoke with considerable warmth, which caused the admiral to say:

"Well, Lady Lucille, your word in his behalf got him a lieutenantcy, and I shall look upon him as your *protege*, and thank God he is what he is, for had he not been we would now be cast down in grief, mourning for you and Burnett, as we do for poor Captain Moore.

"This has been a sad day for us, Sir George, but I am glad it is no worse."

"Yes, thank God it is no worse," said Lieutenant Pearley, and he glanced at Lady Lucille, while all others present felt that they could say amen to that prayer.

CHAPTER VII. THE REFUGE.

WHEN Cecil Conrad left the mansion of Elm Haven, he picked up his jacket, shoes and cap from the cliff, and wended his way over the hill to a steep pathway leading down the rocky shores of the inlet at the head of which was his home.

The entrance to the inlet was narrow, hardly two hundred feet wide, with bold rocky arms of land upon either side, but once within, it spread out like a lake, and to the width of half a mile, while it penetrated the land back among the hills for half a league.

The storm had abated, but the sea was yet rough, and as the wind blew half a gale, the waters of the inlet were running high.

But this the youth seemed to care nothing for, as he stopped at a small basin in which lay a sail-boat.

The sail was soon set, and casting off, Cecil Conrad took the tiller and went flying up the inlet toward his home.

He ran around a cedar-covered point of land as he neared the hills, and found himself in a sheltered cove hardly an acre in size, but with deep water and a sandy beach.

There, on the slope of the hill, stood an old stone house, large and rambling, and half-covered with ivy, while spreading elms also sheltered it.

There were flowers upon the lawn, and though not half a dozen rooms in the one-time grand old stone mansion were inhabited, the one wing that was, had a look of comfort about it, as though the dwellers there were anxious to have it as homelike as possible.

In the little basin at anchor was a small sloop of trim build and some five tons measurement, and all about it looked shipshape and in perfect order.

A life-boat was drawn up on the shore, with a yawl near it, and the sail-boat, with the others named, comprised the little fleet belonging to The Refuge, as the stone mansion and its half a hundred surrounding acres was known to the dwellers upon the coast.

Seated upon the piazza in an easy-chair was a woman of forty.

Her face was still beautiful, though sad and stamped with the lines of sorrow; but there was about her the unmistakable air of a lady to the manor born.

She smiled as the youth advanced, and said:

"I am glad to see you back, my son, for the roar of the waves and wind told me that a fierce storm was raging outside."

"Yes, mother, it has been blowing great guns; but I promised the butler of Elm Haven that I would give him a fine mess of fish to-day, for there are guests at the mansion, and as the pay for them does not go amiss, I went to take them."

"You are all wet, Cecil, so you must have had

a rough time even in the inlet—yes, and you carry your shoes and jacket in your hand; did you capsize?"

"No, mother, but I have been overboard, as you see."

"And with your best suit on?"

The youth flushed, for he knew that he had put that suit on because he was going up to Elm Haven, for he always did.

But he said, indifferently:

"Yes, mother, I do not like to be seen up at the mansion with my old clothes on; but the truth is I have been at my old tricks again," and the youth laughed.

"What old tricks, Cecil— Ah, I know, you have saved another life."

"Well, yes, mother, and more than one, for had I not kept a boat from delaying to pick me up, there would have not one of the eleven men in her gotten ashore alive, or at least I thought so."

"Ah, my brave, noble boy, you are always risking life for others' sake."

"I could not see them drown, mother; but I saved two more lives besides."

"Two more, Cecil?"

"Yes, mother, though one poor man was drowned, Captain Moore, the commandant of the Hill fort, who is there for fear some American rebels may dash in some night and raid Elm Haven," and the youth's lip curled with a sneer.

"My son, what have you been doing?"

"Tell me!" said Mrs. Conrad, now assured that the youth had much to tell.

"Well, mother, I canceled the debt we owe the Lady Lucille, for her devoted kindness to you when I was at sea, and you were so ill."

"Ah! you saved her life?"

"Yes, mother, for she went with Captain Burnett of the Sea Foe, and Captain Moore of the fort, for a sail in the little Elm Haven yacht down to the village."

"The storm caught them before they reached the haven, their mast was carried away, and their boat wrecked, so I went to their rescue."

"But where were you, my son?"

"On the Elm Haven cliff."

"But, Cecil, how could you—"

"I might as well tell all, mother, for you'll hear—I leaped from the cliff into the sea and—"

"My God! Cecil, my son, you will yet cause me to die of a broken heart in mourning for you."

"Ah, no, mother, but I saw no other way to save them, and Captain Burnett's arm was broken, so he could do nothing, and I had to help them, you see."

"And Lady Lucille St. George owes her life to you, my son?" and there was a strange earnestness in the manner of the woman as she spoke.

"She does, mother."

"And Sir George knows it?"

"Yes, mother, he saw all."

"And what said he?"

"That he would pay me a fair value for his daughter's life at my hands, or about that."

"And your response?"

"That it was an insult to offer me money; but Admiral Lord Chauncey was there, mother, with a dozen officers of lesser rank, and my lord at once offered me a midshipman's berth for my services."

"Ah! he was manly, at least; but you refused it with appropriate thanks, of course?"

"I had not the time, mother, for Lady Lucille came out upon the piazza, and thanking me most warmly, said to the admiral that she had heard of the king having made a common sailor a lieutenant for saving the life of a pet dog, and she thought that as I had saved more than one human life, I was worthy of a higher rank."

"Bless her sweet face; but what said the admiral?"

"He was fully equal to the occasion, mother, for he at once ordered me to report on board Captain Burnett's schooner of war, the Sea Foe, tomorrow, as a lieutenant of junior grade, while he said bring on the coaster would keep me nearer to you."

"He is a good man, Cecil, to say that, and I thank him, while I congratulate you upon having at least won the rank he offered you, though of course you declined the honor?"

"I did nothing of the kind, my good mother."

"Cecil!"

"I mean it, mother, for I accepted the rank and shall report aboard the Sea Foe to-morrow as Lieutenant Cecil Conrad."

"My son, are you mad?"

"No, mother, I am perfectly sane."

"And yet you, an American, will serve in the war that is now breaking out, in the King's Navy, against my kindred and your own, against our people, our country?" and the mother's voice and look were full of bitterness.

"Mother, away back as long as I remember we were poor, and it has been a hard struggle to live."

"You and my father taught me to be a gentleman, for I was born one, and you educated me for a different sphere in life than that I have filled."

"Poverty bred, and a fisherman, I yet felt that I am the peer of Sir George Harwood, for you have taught me so to feel; but now I have

done that for which I have won rank in the Royal Navy which places me upon an equal with these aristocrats, these nobles, and I accepted the position that I might go aboard their vessels, might learn their ways and be their equal, and then—*resign*."

"Ah, you do not then intend to remain in the King's Navy my son?"

"For a month, mother, perhaps longer; until Sir George has invited me to dine at his house, until he has acknowledged me, the fisher-lad, his equal, and I know just what the King's Navy in these waters is."

"Then, mother, I shall resign, for I will have won my rank, and I will not have turned a gun upon our own people."

"I will tell the admiral that as an American I cannot fight my countrymen, and so resigning in honor, I shall offer myself and the experience I have gained to the navy the Colonies must have would they fight successfully Britain's king."

"Not a disloyal act will I do, mother, against our people, nor the king whom I shall temporarily serve; but this lieutenantcy is my stepping-stone, and by it will I ascend the ladder of fame, for, mother, I am a patriot, and I will not bow to English tyranny."

"Do you understand now, my dear mother, why I to-morrow assume the duties and rank of a lieutenant in the King's Navy?"

"Yes, and another must understand as I do, Cecil."

"Come with me at once," and, rising, she entered the mansion, her son following her in silence, and with the air of one who could now hold his head up among his fellow-men with just cause for so doing.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MYSTERY OF THE OLD STONE MANSION.

FOR years a mystery had hung over the stone mansion at the head of the inlet, where the Conrads dwelt, and there were many who said that the place was haunted.

Certainly after nightfall the denizens along the coast never cared to go near the place, and an old-time high road in the rear a quarter of a mile had long since dropped into disuse, and, though nearer, few traveled it, a way around the hills having been chosen.

There were many, too, who did not even care to go in daylight within hailing distance of the premises.

The lands of Elm Haven surrounded those of The Refuge, which had about it only some fifty acres.

The soil in the valley and on the hills was good, yet remained untilled, only an acre of garden in the rear of the mansion being cultivated for vegetables.

There were fruit trees there, and these were cared for, a good pasturage for the two cows, and a flock of chickens roosted in one of the deserted wings of the mansion.

The inlet and ocean furnished fish for food, and Cecil's rifle brought down game in abundance.

Where the income of the Conrads came from no one knew, and yet, though poor, they had never appeared to be really in want, and certainly Cecil's earnings as a sailor, and now and then as skipper of his own little craft, could not wholly supply them.

Captain Conrad had been a sea-captain, it was said, yet the oldest inhabitants did not seem to recall him, and it was said that he had been lost at sea when Cecil was a small boy, but of his death the widow never spoke.

He had, in the long ago, brought home from a voyage two Africans, a negro and negress, and as slavery was allowed then in the Colonies, they became his slaves.

They seemed however devoted to him, and his beautiful young wife, whom he had married under circumstances that no one seemed to remember.

His having these two slaves gave rise also to the rumor that he had been a slaver, and from that it was even said that he had been a pirate.

The Stone Hall, as it was then called, had been Mrs. Conrad's inheritance, and she had been living there alone with her father when she met, in some way, Captain Conrad, and became his wife.

Some years after Mrs. Conrad's father had died, and subsequently Sir George Harwood had married the young heiress to Elm Haven and gone there to live, though still retaining his commission as an officer under the king.

Not long after Sir George came to Elm Haven, the news that Captain Conrad had been lost at sea was heard, but his young and beautiful widow made no change in her life and still lived at The Refuge, with her little boy Cecil and the two Africans, who were devoted to her.

There were gossips, when seeing either Congo or his wife Kaloo in the village purchasing supplies for the little household, who sought to question them regarding their mistress and her life.

But just when questioned neither Congo or Kaloo remembered enough English to reply, and so the attempts always failed, and the mys-

to aid him, the sailor had the more rapidly made his way along the rough side of the cliff, clinging in crevices of the rock, and to every projection, until now he had reached the point almost.

CHAPTER V. AN INSULT.

WHEN the servants with the ladder and ropes reached the cliff, panting, as though they had worked hard, Lieutenant Paul Pearley, whom the admiral had designated as the officer to go over the cliff, had thrown aside his uniform coat and hat and stood ready for the duty of going to the rescue of the youth.

The ropes were tangled however, and it took some minutes to get them undone, and the servants were ordered to take off their liveried coats and form cushions with them over the edge of the cliff, to keep the ropes from being cut by the sharp edges of the rocks.

All this took time, and men nervously glanced over at the one for whom all these preparations were being made.

The worst of the storm was over, and without rain; but the wind yet blew half a gale, and there were several who remarked that its force alone held the youth against the cliff, and certainly it seemed so, for the frail supports he had, seemed hardly sufficient to uphold an eagle.

Learning from the servants what her bold rescuer was doing, Lady Lucille hastily began to dress, to go out and see what the fate of the reckless youth would be.

But, as she approached the window she saw the excited group gathered upon the point of the cliff, and from her lips broke the fervent prayer:

"God have mercy upon him, for He alone can save him now."

Breathlessly the crews on the vessels gazed up at the form clinging to the face of the cliff, and yet moving, and the nimble tars cursed those for land-lubbers who were trying to aid him, yet so slowly that every minute of time seemed an age.

"All ready, sir," and with a rope about his waist Lieutenant Paul Pearley stepped to the edge of the cliff with the air of a man whose cool head was undaunted by the dizzy height on which he stood.

Then looking over he called down:

"Now, my gallant lad, hold hard, and I will soon be alongside and make fast a rope about you."

The youth looked up and his eyes met those of the young officer; but he said firmly:

"I thank you, sir, but I am an American, and I will owe to no Englishman my life! I will take the chances of the leap into the breakers first."

"This is madness, my man— Good God! he has taken the leap he threatened!" and the British officer fairly staggered at the sight.

A wild cry of alarm rose from the lips of those upon the cliff, while a deep roar burst from the hundreds of men upon the decks of the two vessels a third of a mile away.

But the youth had not leaped recklessly, for he had coolly measured every chance for and against him.

He had reached the prow of the cliff, if I may so call it, and rested there upon a projection of rock, a pedestal for a small statue to stand upon but hardly for a man.

Yet he turned upon it and with his back against the rock, his hands stretched out and clasping what they could, he stood there, calmly surveying the situation.

He had made his way along the cliff three hundred feet, from the spot where he had begun to climb.

But for the washing of the rains, he could readily have gone on to the summit, but this he did not know until he had gone too far to retrace his way.

Now he stood seventy feet above the waves which dashed against the cliff with a fury that seemed to shake it to its foundation.

Could he spring clear out into the rebound, his marvelous strength and skill as a swimmer would carry him around the point, when he could again land in the surf breaking upon the sandy beach a hundred yards away from the cliff.

Such were his chances, and all saw them as he did.

From the eyes of those on the vessels' decks, he quickly disappeared after taking his leap, for they were shut out from a view by the arm of land that formed a breakwater for the little harborage.

But the cool-headed one on the cliff, who dared look over, saw him descend feet foremost into the crest of a mighty wave; then followed a moment of awful suspense; and soon, far out from the cliff, a form appeared, and even the lazy servants of St. George joined in the wild cheer, as all beheld the daring sailor breasting the sea with powerful strokes that were sending him along around the danger point.

He waved his hand in response to the cheer, which was answered by the vessels' crews, for it told them that the desperate leap had been made and won.

Then all eagerly ran along the cliff, watching the swimmer as he was driven shoreward, and dropping upon her knees in her window, for the cheers had told her all, Lady Lucille cried earnestly:

"God above! I thank Thee!"

From the cliff they saw the sailor fairly hurled ashore on the mighty waves, and flying from its receding force gain the beach beyond.

There, slowly moving along, bearing upon a litter the body of Captain Moore, were the soldiers sent from the fort, and the youth fell into line in the rear with respectful mien.

Thus up the steep pathway filed the little party, until at the top they were met by General Harwood and his guests.

A cloak had been thrown over the form, and all raised their hats in reverence to the dead soldier as the bearers passed with him.

But as they moved on, the youth in the rear was also passing by, as though anxious to avoid being seen, when Admiral Chauncey called out:

"Ho! my lad, I would speak with you."

Thus urged, the youth dropped back, and the admiral said:

"Come with us to the piazza yonder."

The face of the young man flushed, but he obeyed in silence, and soon Sir George and his guests were seated upon the broad steps of the piazza.

"Be seated, my man, for you must be fatigued."

"Sir George, I have your permission to speak with this brave lad here?"

"Certainly, Admiral Chauncey, and I also have something to say to him."

"I yield first to you then, Sir George, for he has saved the life of your daughter."

"Thanks, my Lord Admiral; but what I will say is but the work of a minute."

"Sit down, Conrad."

"Thank you, Sir George Harwood, but I am not fatigued, and I am anxious to return to my home, as my mother will be worried, should she hear I was in danger."

"Ah! a dutiful son, as well as a hero," muttered the admiral.

"Well, Conrad, let me first ask you why you were so foolhardy as to return by way of the cliff?"

"To be frank, sir, it was to escape just what I am undergoing now, for I believed I could reach the cliff unseen, get my jacket and shoes, and go to my home."

"You are most anxious to avoid observation, it seems; but I will not reprimand you, as I am too deeply grateful for what you have done for me but now."

"With my daughter dead, life would hold but few charms for me, and hence I am anxious to prove my appreciation by giving you a pecuniary reward which will place your mother above want in her latter years."

All saw the eyes of the sailor flash fire, and his voice rung with anger, as he said:

"I am a man, Sir George Harwood, and when you insult me by offers of gold, do you wonder at my risking my life a second time to avoid coming by your mansion to escape just what has now fallen from your lips?"

"By the King's crown, sir, but you are the insulter, and you shall rue your words!" angrily cried Sir George, while all were amazed at the boldness of the young sailor, and a few felt sympathy for him.

"I am not your servant, Sir George, though my poverty forces me to sell edibles to your table; but I shall not retract my words, for yours is the insult, to offer me gold for the life of your daughter."

"By Heaven, but you are a bold and well spoken youth!" cried the admiral, and, anxious to avoid further trouble, he continued:

"As he has refused your aid, Sir George, let me tell him that the king wants just such cool-headed fellows as he has proven himself to be for officers, and though he is an American, I will waive the fact and offer him the berth of a midshipman in the Royal Navy."

Again the face of the young sailor flushed, but there was a flash of pride in his eyes, and he was about to reply to the admiral, when Lady Lucille swept out upon the piazza and advanced toward him with extended hand.

CHAPTER VI. WELL WON.

ALL started to their feet as Lady Lucille came out upon the piazza, her face pale, but her eyes bright, and as hats were doffed to her, she bowed in return, but swept on to where the sailor stood.

"Conrad, seven years ago, when a mere boy, you risked your life to save from drowning one of my father's servants, and since then I have heard that your gallant deeds have won you the name of Cecil the Life-Saver."

"To-day you saved from a fearful death, against odds that few men, if any, would have dared, Captain Godfrey Burnett and myself, and to prevent the loss of the boat's crew, if it delayed to pick you up, offered yourself as a sacrifice, if you could not reach the shore."

"I but now heard you tell my father why you again placed your life in jeopardy, and I believe that I can appreciate your wishing to avoid

thanks; but you are here now, and must hear me tell you that from my very soul I thank you for all that you have done for me this day."

There was a dead silence while Lady Lucille spoke, and all heard her low, but distinctly uttered words, while they saw tears gather in her beautiful eyes as she thanked the young sailor for her life.

As for the youth he stood like a statue, his face pale, not a muscle moving, and when she grasped his hand in both her own, he bent low in acknowledgment.

Then he replied, with not the slightest show of embarrassment at the presence he was in:

"Lady Lucille, when my mother was ill a year ago, and I away at sea, you were her devoted nurse and friend, and thus kept her alive and from want."

"To-day I but repaid the debt of gratitude I owed you; but will thank you for your kind words and say farewell."

"Hold on, my young gentleman, for you are one if you are low-born, for I have not finished with you," called out Admiral Lord Chauncey.

At his words Conrad turned toward him respectfully, while Lady Lucille quickly said:

"Admiral Chauncey, I have heard that his Majesty made a lieutenant of a common sailor for springing into the sea and rescuing his favorite dog which had fallen overboard, and I think one who has taken the great risks which this—this gentleman has to save Captain Burnett, myself, yes, and a boat's crew, is worthy of a higher rank under the king than that of midshipman."

"Egad, Lady Lucille, you are right, and I shall appoint him a lieutenant in the navy."

"It will tickle these Americans too, who are about to go to war with us," he added in a low tone to Sir George, who responded:

"His act deserves it, though his conduct does not; but I also beg the rank for him, my lord, in gratitude for what I owe to him."

"Well said, Sir George," and turning to the youth he asked:

"What is your name, my lad?"

"Cecil Conrad, my lord."

"Your age?"

"Twenty-two, sir."

"You are an American, I suppose?"

"I am proud to say that I am, my lord."

"Yes, yes, it is the devilish pride of you Americans that is getting you into trouble now with the king."

"But what is your occupation?"

"I was a coaster, sir, then a deep-sea sailor; but my mother is in delicate health, my lord, and not caring to go far from home, I am a fisherman, coaster, or whatever else I can get to do near here."

"Ah! a dutiful son; but you speak like a man of education, certainly."

"My parents, sir, have taught me much, and I studied with a French professor who lived in the village near which is my home."

"I see; but where is your home?"

"Over the hill, yonder, my lord, a mile up the inlet that juts in between the rocks."

"Well, Mr. Cecil Conrad, as you desire to be near your home, you can report on board the coast cruiser Sea Foe, now in the harbor, for as Captain Burnett will be laid up for some weeks with his broken arm, he will doubtless be glad to have an under-officer broken in for his vessel."

"I thank you, my lord; but when am I to report, and, in what capacity, may I ask?"

"Report to-morrow, sir, and as a junior lieutenant, the rank your deeds this day won for you— Oh! here is Lieutenant Girard, who is now in command."

"Permit me, Commander Girard, to present to you a new officer, Lieutenant Cecil Conrad, of the King's Navy, sir."

"I am more than happy to welcome so brave a man, sir, to our vessel," was the frank response of the lieutenant, and Paul Pearley also stepped forward and said:

"Permit me to offer my congratulations, Lieutenant Conrad, and to say that you deserve the honor you have won."

Other officers stepped forward, though some with a bad grace, it must be admitted, and extended their congratulations, all of which Cecil Conrad accepted in the most modest manner, and was again turning to depart, after thanking the admiral in generous terms, when Sir George said:

"You will permit me also to say I am glad of the honor conferred upon you, Conrad, by the admiral, and I hope that you will prove worthy of his confidence."

It seemed that the newly-appointed officer was about to make a hot response, when Lady Lucille quickly said:

"It was because he proved himself worthy that Admiral Chauncey appointed him."

"Lieutenant Conrad, accept my wishes for a brilliant future."

The young sailor bent low, but uttered no word in reply, and turning quickly, strode away.

They saw him go to the cliff, and pick up the things he had cast off before making the leap to the rescue, and then stride rapidly away toward the hill that overlooked the further inlet, and

disappear down the pathway by which he had come to the mansion.

"A strange fellow that, proud as a noble, and with the courtly manners of a cavalier, while he has the grit of a dozen men," said Lord Chauncey, gazing after him.

"Yes, he is proud, and as poor as my humblest servant.

"It is just such false pride with these Americans that are causing these disturbances we are having, my lord," remarked Sir George.

"You seem to feel some grudge against him, Sir George. But who is he?"

Sir George glanced at his daughter and said: "I did have a grudge against him, but it is over now.

"The truth is, my lord, the boy's ancestors, I believe, once owned Elm Haven and all the land about here; but fast living ruined them, and all that his mother now has is about forty acres at the head of the inlet, and which she has refused to sell to me, though I have offered treble its value.

"My agent, knowing I wanted it, tried persecution, I believe, to drive them out, but got soundly thrashed for it by the youth, who is a perfect giant in strength, slender as he appears.

"I have never heard any harm of the lad, other than that he puts on the airs of a gentleman."

"But you have heard much that was good, father, for he has supported his mother for years, young as he is, while he is considered the best sailor on the coast, and, by his many daring rescues of people from death, has won the name of the Boy Life-Saver," and Lady Lucille spoke with considerable warmth, which caused the admiral to say:

"Well, Lady Lucille, your word in his behalf got him a lieutenantcy, and I shall look upon him as your *protege*, and thank God he is what he is, for had he not been we would now be cast down in grief, mourning for you and Burnett, as we do for poor Captain Moore.

"This has been a sad day for us, Sir George, but I am glad it is no worse."

"Yes, thank God it is no worse," said Lieutenant Pearley, and he glanced at Lady Lucille, while all others present felt that they could say amen to that prayer.

CHAPTER VII. THE REFUGE.

WHEN Cecil Conrad left the mansion of Elm Haven, he picked up his jacket, shoes and cap from the cliff, and wended his way over the hill to a steep pathway leading down the rocky shores of the inlet at the head of which was his home.

The entrance to the inlet was narrow, hardly two hundred feet wide, with bold rocky arms of land upon either side, but once within, it spread out like a lake, and to the width of half a mile, while it penetrated the land back among the hills for half a league.

The storm had abated, but the sea was yet rough, and as the wind blew half a gale, the waters of the inlet were running high.

But this the youth seemed to care nothing for, as he stopped at a small basin in which lay a sail-boat.

The sail was soon set, and casting off, Cecil Conrad took the tiller and went flying up the inlet toward his home.

He ran around a cedar-covered point of land as he neared the hills, and found himself in a sheltered cove hardly an acre in size, but with deep water and a sandy beach.

There, on the slope of the hill, stood an old stone house, large and rambling, and half-covered with ivy, while spreading elms also sheltered it.

There were flowers upon the lawn, and though not half a dozen rooms in the one-time grand old stone mansion were inhabited, the one wing that was, had a look of comfort about it, as though the dwellers there were anxious to have it as homelike as possible.

In the little basin at anchor was a small sloop of trim build and some five tons measurement, and all about it looked shipsbape and in perfect order.

A life-boat was drawn up on the shore, with a yawl near it, and the sail-boat, with the others named, comprised the little fleet belonging to The Refuge, as the stone mansion and its half a hundred surrounding acres was known to the dwellers upon the coast.

Seated upon the piazza in an easy-chair was a woman of forty.

Her face was still beautiful, though sad and stamped with the lines of sorrow; but there was about her the unmistakable air of a lady to the manor born.

She smiled as the youth advanced, and said: "I am glad to see you back, my son, for the roar of the waves and wind told me that a fierce storm was raging outside."

"Yes, mother, it has been blowing great guns; but I promised the butler of Elm Haven that I would give him a fine mess of fish to-day, for there are guests at the mansion, and as the pay for them does not go amiss, I went to take them."

"You are all wet, Cecil, so you must have had

a rough time even in the inlet—yes, and you carry your shoes and jacket in your hand; did you capsize?"

"No, mother, but I have been overboard, as you see."

"And with your best suit on?"

The youth flushed, for he knew that he had put that suit on because he was going up to Elm Haven, for he always did.

But he said, indifferently:

"Y's, mother, I do not like to be seen up at the mansion with my old clothes on; but the truth is I have been at my old tricks again," and the youth laughed.

"What old tricks, Cecil— Ah, I know, you have saved another life."

"Well, yes, mother, and more than one, for had I not kept a boat from delaying to pick me up, there would have not one of the eleven men in her gotten ashore alive, or at least I thought so."

"Ah, my brave, noble boy, you are always risking life for others' sake."

"I could not see them drown, mother; but I saved two more lives besides."

"Two more, Cecil?"

"Yes, mother, though one poor man was drowned, Captain Moore, the commandant of the Hill fort, who is there for fear some American rebels may dash in some night and raid Elm Haven," and the youth's lip curled with a sneer.

"My son, what have you been doing?"

"Tell me!" said Mrs. Conrad, now assured that the youth had much to tell.

"Well, mother, I canceled the debt we owe the Lady Lucille, for her devoted kindness to you when I was at sea, and you were so ill."

"Ah! you saved her life?"

"Yes, mother, for she went with Captain Burnett of the Sea Foe, and Captain Moore of the fort, for a sail in the little Elm Haven yacht down to the village."

"The storm caught them before they reached the haven, their mast was carried away, and their boat wrecked, so I went to their rescue."

"But where were you, my son?"

"On the Elm Haven cliff."

"But, Cecil, how could you—"

"I might as well tell all, mother, for you'll hear—I leaped from the cliff into the sea and—"

"My God! Cecil, my son, you will yet cause me to die of a broken heart in mourning for you."

"Ah, no, mother, but I saw no other way to save them, and Captain Burnett's arm was broken, so he could do nothing, and I had to help them, you see."

"And Lady Lucille St. George owes her life to you, my son?" and there was a strange earnestness in the manner of the woman as she spoke.

"She does, mother."

"And Sir George knows it?"

"Yes, mother, he saw all."

"And what said he?"

"That he would pay me a fair value for his daughter's life at my hands, or about that."

"And your response?"

"That it was an insult to offer me money; but Admiral Lord Chauncey was there, mother, with a dozen officers of lesser rank, and my lord at once offered me a midshipman's berth for my services."

"Ah! he was manly, at least; but you refused it with appropriate thanks, of course?"

"I had not the time, mother, for Lady Lucille came out upon the piazza, and thanking me most warmly, said to the admiral that she had heard of the king having made a common sailor a lieutenant for saving the life of a pet dog, and she thought that as I had saved more than one human life, I was worthy of a higher rank."

"Bless her sweet face; but what said the admiral?"

"He was fully equal to the occasion, mother, for he at once ordered me to report on board Captain Burnett's schooner of war, the Sea Foe, tomorrow, as a lieutenant of junior grade, while he said being on the coaster would keep me nearer to you."

"He is a good man, Cecil, to say that, and I thank him, while I congratulate you upon having at least won the rank he offered you, though of course you declined the honor?"

"I did nothing of the kind, my good mother."

"Cecil?"

"I mean it, mother, for I accepted the rank and shall report aboard the Sea Foe to-morrow as Lieutenant Cecil Conrad."

"My son, are you mad?"

"No, mother, I am perfectly sane."

"And yet you, an American, will serve in the war that is now breaking out, in the King's Navy, against my kindred and your own, against our people, our country?" and the mother's voice and look were full of bitterness.

"Mother, away back as long as I remember we were poor, and it has been a hard struggle to live."

"You and my father taught me to be a gentleman, for I was born one, and you educated me for a different sphere in life than that I have filled."

"Poverty bred, and a fisherman, I yet felt that I am the peer of Sir George Harwood, for you have taught me so to feel; but now I have

done that for which I have won rank in the Royal Navy which places me upon an equal with these aristocrats, these nobles, and I accepted the position that I might go aboard their vessels, might learn their ways and be their equal, and then—resign."

"Ah, you do not then intend to remain in the King's Navy my son?"

"For a month, mother, perhaps longer; until Sir George has invited me to dine at his house, until he has acknowledged me, the fisher-lad, his equal, and I know just what the King's Navy in these waters is."

"Then, mother, I shall resign, for I will have won my rank, and I will not have turned a gun upon our own people."

"I will tell the admiral that as an American I cannot fight my countrymen, and so resigning in honor, I shall offer myself and the experience I have gained to the navy the Colonies must have would they fight successfully Britain's king."

"Not a disloyal act will I do, mother, against our people, nor the king whom I shall temporarily serve; but this lieutenantcy is my stepping-stone, and by it will I ascend the ladder of fame, for, mother, I am a patriot, and I will not bow to English tyranny."

"Do you understand now, my dear mother, why I to-morrow assume the duties and rank of a lieutenant in the King's Navy?"

"Yes, and another must understand as I do, Cecil."

"Come with me at once," and, rising, she entered the mansion, her son following her in silence, and with the air of one who could now hold his head up among his fellow-men with just cause for so doing.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE MYSTERY OF THE OLD STONE MANSION.

FOR years a mystery had hung over the stone mansion at the head of the inlet, where the Conrads dwelt, and there were many who said that the place was haunted.

Certainly after nightfall the denizens along the coast never cared to go near the place, and an old-time high road in the rear a quarter of a mile had long since dropped into disuse, and, though nearer, few traveled it, a way around the hills having been chosen.

There were many, too, who did not even care to go in daylight within hailing distance of the premises.

The lands of Elm Haven surrounded those of The Refuge, which had about it only some fifty acres.

The soil in the valley and on the hills was good, yet remained untillied, only an acre of garden in the rear of the mansion being cultivated for vegetables.

There were fruit trees there, and these were cared for, a good pasturage for the two cows, and a flock of chickens roosted in one of the deserted wings of the mansion.

The inlet and ocean furnished fish for food, and Cecil's rifle brought down game in abundance.

Where the income of the Conrads came from no one knew, and yet, though poor, they had never appeared to be really in want, and certainly Cecil's earnings as a sailor, and now and then as skipper of his own little craft, could not wholly supply them.

Captain Conrad had been a sea-captain, it was said, yet the oldest inhabitants did not seem to recall him, and it was said that he had been lost at sea when Cecil was a small boy, but of his death the widow never spoke.

He had, in the long ago, brought home from a voyage two Africans, a negro and negress, and as slavery was allowed then in the Colonies, they became his slaves.

They seemed however devoted to him, and his beautiful young wife, whom he had married under circumstances that no one seemed to remember.

His having these two slaves gave rise also to the rumor that he had been a slaver, and from that it was even said that he had been a pirate.

The Stone Hall, as it was then called, had been Mrs. Conrad's inheritance, and she had been living there alone with her father when she met, in some way, Captain Conrad, and became his wife.

Some years after Mrs. Conrad's father had died, and subsequently Sir George Harwood had married the young heiress to Elm Haven and gone there to live, though still retaining his commission as an officer under the king.

Not long after Sir George came to Elm Haven, the news that Captain Conrad had been lost at sea was heard, but his young and beautiful widow made no change in her life and still lived at The Refuge, with her little boy Cecil and the two Africans, who were devoted to her.

There were gossips, when seeing either Congo or his wife Kaloo in the village purchasing supplies for the little household, who sought to question them regarding their mistress and her life.

But just when questioned neither Congo or Kaloo remembered enough English to reply, and so the attempts always failed, and the mys-

tery upon The Refuge but deepened year by year.

As he grew in years Cecil gave promise of becoming a very remarkable youth.

Old Congo had taught him to swim as they did in Africa, and the boy had several times been known to put on an old suit of clothes, swim out of the inlet and down the coast a league to the village for some small purchase, and wrapping it up in oil silk securely, to return in the same way.

Time and again he had gone out in his life-skiff to the aid of a wrecked crew, and his exploits along the coast had won him the name of the Boy Life-Saver.

Though going to the village school, taught by an old exile, a Frenchman, he had always held himself aloof from the children in a certain degree, and though not haughty toward them, was never familiar.

Ever the champion of the weak against the strong, he was the idol of the scholars, and their hero also, for he the weather what it might, he came and went the league to his home in his little surf-skiff, and old seafarers admitted that a bolder sailor and better pilot was not known along the coast, than was Cecil, the Life-Saver.

Those who had been bold enough to question him about his home affairs, had never done so a second time, and many had remarked that:

"Master Cecil was proud as though he had been born a noble, and had all the manners of a gentleman."

Then there were ugly rumors that the life of Captain Conrad had not been a happy one, that he was conscience-stricken for the life he had led at sea, and dying without Christian burial his ghost haunted the waters about The Refuge, and also the hills and valleys round about the old mansion.

There were in fact, scores of coasters, who were ready to make oath that they had seen Captain Conrad's ghost out on the sea off the inlet at night in a surf-skiff, or the shallop belonging to Cecil, and farmers too vowed that they had come across his spirit in the forests near his former home.

When hailed at sea he would utter no word, but wave his arms wildly and sail away.

When seen on shore he also would remain silent and seem to glide rapidly away through the woodland.

Men of undoubted truth had asserted that they had seen "Conrad's ghost," until few there were in the neighborhood who doubted it; in those days of almost universal superstition.

If these ugly stories reached the ears of Mrs. Conrad she paid no heed to them, while it would be a brave man who would speak to Cecil of his father's ghost having been seen, after the experience several had had who had done so, for the youth was quick to resent any slur upon his father's memory.

It was said among the coasters, that, after having seen Conrad's ghost, some dire calamity was certain to follow, and so the superstitious people who dwelt near made it a rule never to be caught out after nightfall on the sea in the vicinity of Refuge Inlet, or to travel the road that ran in the rear of the mansion after darkness had fallen.

But for all this the "ghost" was now and then seen, and if there was a death in the village a week after they made it a case of ill-omen, and "I told you so's" were sure to be around in numbers.

The more superstitious even went so far as to say that Conrad's ghost furnished his family with gold, or led them to where it could be found.

Time and again Congo and Kaloo had been asked if they ever saw the ghost of their master, and their answers then were in English and to the point, for immediately they would say:

"Yas, oh yas, heap many times."

More they would not say, but the air of truth the words were uttered with caused them to be believed by those who heard them.

And so the mystery hung upon the old stone mansion, deepening as the years rolled on, and the mother, son and two Africans lived almost like recluses from their fellow-beings, though not as much was it the case with Cecil as with the others, for he had been off to sea for several cruises, had coasted from the Kennebec River to the Delaware, and would often be seen in the village, and always had a pleasant word for those who addressed him, when not to meddle in his affairs, while he was called "Master Cecil," by the villagers on account of his aristocratic air and courtly manners.

And seated around the table of Sir George Harwood, Admiral Chauncey and his officers heard there stories of the dwellers in the old Stone Hall, and the mysteries that hung over the place, and there was not one of them who was not impressed with what they heard, and were prepared to regard the new officer of the Sea Foe as a man of mystery.

"Well, Sir George, with his knowledge of this coast and its people, he will be invaluable to us, and from what I have seen of the youth, I predict that he will win fame for himself, while his good looks and daring will break the hearts of scores of pretty girls; mark my words, Lady Lucille, and guard well your

heart, for that young lad is a dangerous fellow to both men and women."

And there were others present who thought so too, though they kept their own counsel.

CHAPTER IX.

A STRANGE FRIENDSHIP.

ON account of the sad death of Captain Moore, who was a favorite with all who knew him, and the fact that Captain Burnett was laid up with a broken arm, and utterly exhausted from his desperate efforts in the sea, Admiral Chauncey did the right thing, and after a lunch at Elm Haven, in place of the grand dinner that was to have been given in the evening, bade farewell to his host and lovely hostess, and set sail in the sloop-of-war for Boston.

An hour after the departure of the fleet, General Sir George Harwood went on a visit to the cruiser, leaving his daughter to seek her room and rest. Sir George was anxious to have a talk with Lieutenant Jules Girard, who was in command, as his captain was laid up in the Elm Haven Mansion, about his new officer, Cecil Conrad.

To tell the truth, Sir George had never liked the young man, even from boyhood.

There was something about him that seemed to call up an unpleasant memory, and, though Lady Lucille did not know it, hot words had passed between the baronet and the young sailor, when one day Sir George meeting him hunting had ordered him off of his lands.

"You certainly have never known where your boundary-line runs, Sir George, if you say this is your land, for I am standing upon property my mother's family have owned for generations, and you are the intruder," was the cool reply of Cecil, who was then not fifteen years of age.

A glance at his surroundings showed Sir George that the boy was right, but he said hastily:

"The land properly belongs to my estate, and if your old witch of a mother will not sell it to me when I offer treble its worth, I'll drive you all from it some day."

The moment he uttered the words, Sir George saw that he had made a mistake, that he had gone too far, for idle gossip, owing to the mystery overhanging The Refuge, had hinted that Mrs. Conrad might be a witch.

Cecil turned livid at the words that he heard, and dropping his rifle forward, he leveled it full at the heart of the English colonel, for such was his rank then, while he said:

"Had you slandered me, Sir George Harwood, I would not care; but you shall retract those words against my mother or I will send a bullet through your heart."

Sir George knew the boy, and he did not for a moment doubt that he meant what he said, while he was no fool to throw his life away.

So he said in a tone he meant to be frank:

"I was wrong, Conrad, to speak of your mother as I did, and I am glad to see you have the courage to defend her even against one of my position; but you angered me, and—"

"Then insult me, not my mother."

"You are on my land, Sir George Harwood."

"And I shall leave it at once, my fine fellow; but whenever you desire to sell out, I will pay your mother a liberal price."

"Thank you, sir," and the youth returned the bow of the baronet, who hastily departed, and never forgot the rebuff he had met with from a boy.

But soon after Cecil saved the life of one of the servants from Elm Haven, and Sir George ever after spoke pleasantly to him when they met, which was seldom, for though selling fish to the butler at the mansion, the lad always tried to avoid meeting the master.

Several times he had met Lady Lucille when she was at Elm Haven, home from school in Boston, and one day she had stood on the cliff and called out to him as he stood on the shore of the inlet rifle in hand.

"Kill that eagle, young huntsman, if you can, and I'll present you with a silk flag for your boat."

Quick as a flash the boy sailor raised his rifle, and though the distance was great and the eagle on the wing, he dropped him into the sea, while Lady Lucille merrily clapped her hands and called out:

"You are a dead shot, Master Cecil, the Life-Saver, and you have won your colors."

Casting aside his jacket and shoes, the youth sprang into the inlet and swam out into the open sea, where the eagle had fallen.

Lady Lucille called loudly to him in alarm to come back, but on he swam, and as the tide was carrying the eagle seaward, it was some time before he could come up with him.

Then he found that the bird only had a broken wing, and showed fight desperately.

Diving beneath him he grasped his feet, and dragging him under water, soon drowned him, when he arose and started on his swim landward.

The tide had carried him more than a mile away, and he no longer saw Lady Lucille upon the cliff; but he swam on with strong and steady stroke, though it was harder work than

he had expected to stem the swiftly outflowing current.

Suddenly out of the entrance to Elm Haven he saw a small surf-skiff come, and a glance, as he rose on another wave, told him who it was that held the oars.

Straight toward him the skiff came, skillfully rowed and strongly, too, and while he was still a quarter of a mile from the land it ran alongside.

"Foolish boy, you frightend me so, and all for a wretched eagle!"

"Can you get into the skiff?"

"Oh, yes, Lady Lucille," and he threw the eagle in first, with the remark:

"I will take it home and stuff it for you, Lady Lucille, if you will accept it from me."

"Certainly I will, and I will get the silk and make your flag and have it for you as soon as I can."

"What is the name of your boat, sir?"

"I will call her the Surf Angel, for you came through a wild surf to save me, and let me tell you, Lady Lucille, that I do not believe I could have reached the shore again, for I have just been up a couple of days from a severe illness, and am quite weak; but for that the swim would have been nothing for me."

"Again I say, naughty boy! No, I am going to row back, so take the tiller and steer through the breakers."

He obeyed, for he was really quite exhausted, and Lady Lucille pulled the surf-skiff back into the harbor, when the youth took the eagle and started homeward with it.

Some weeks after he went to the mansion with the eagle, which he had skillfully dressed and stuffed, and mounted upon a small stand with spread wings.

Lady Lucille accepted the present with many thanks, and pain for the work he had done, and some days after rode down to The Refuge with the flag, a blue field in which she had embroidered an eagle in gold, while a red pennant had upon it in silver letters:

"SURF ANGEL."

Cecil was delighted with his present, and the next day Lady Lucille stood on the cliff and saw the Surf Angel stand out to sea with her colors flying and her master at the helm.

This occurred a couple of years after the affair between Sir George and Cecil, and when Lady Lucille was only in her fourteenth year; but from that day the two were always friendly when they happened to meet, though the young girl did not often get a chance to escape the hawk eyes of her governess, who was her constant companion.

Of course Sir George had been told of the eagle and flag episode, and because Lady Lucille seemed to like the youth was reason enough to add to his dislike for him.

When Cecil was away at sea, on a cruise in the West Indies on an English brig-of-war, Lady Lucille had heard from the servants that the Widow Conrad was lying very ill, and she had at once ridden down to The Refuge to see her.

Sir George was away, so the young girl persuaded a surgeon on a vessel-of-war that often made the haven its anchoring ground, to go with her to see the sick woman, and his skill at once made a change for the better in her condition, while Lady Lucille proved herself a devoted nurse and sent to the invalid as she grew better various delicacies from the mansion.

This devotion Mrs. Conrad never forgot, and when Cecil returned from his cruise, he at once went to the mansion and thanked the maiden for her kindness, and it was perhaps fortunate for the youth that Sir George was absent with his command at the time he boldly called at his elegant house.

Such had been the acquaintance of Cecil Conrad with the family at Elm Haven, up to the day when the youth, on his way to the butler with fish, had seen the danger of the yacht and had swerved from his path toward the rear of the mansion, to report it to Sir George whom he saw with his guests upon the piazza.

And while Sir George that same day had believed Lady Lucille setting in her room, she had quietly ordered her horse and ridden off alone, telling her groom he need not accompany her.

And her destination was The Refuge.

CHAPTER X.

WEIRD WARNINGS.

WHOEVER it was that Mrs. Conrad had wished her son to repeat the story to which he had told her, it certainly kept the young sailor in the house for a long time, and this was no easy task to do in his case, for his restless spirit loved the free air too well to be housed up indoors.

But at last Cecil appeared, dressed in a dry suit, and with his sailor cap sitting jauntily upon his head.

He had had dinner, which Kaloo, under the training of Mrs. Conrad knew well how to cook and serve, and he went for a stroll in the forest, to think over the strange happenings of the day.

The sun was hardly an hour from the horizon, and he stopped on a hill to gaze at the piled-up masses of gold, silver and crimson into which the storm-clouds had been transformed.

As he stood there, his quick ear caught the clatter of boots coming along the path leading to The Refuge.

Visitors at his home were of such strikingly rare occurrence that he looked in the direction of the sound with considerable surprise to know who it could be.

A moment more and his dark, handsome face flushed, for he recognized the rider.

It was Lady Lucille, and she discovered him almost as soon as he had her.

"I am glad to meet you, Lieutenant Conrad, for I was going to your home," she said, giving a slight emphasis upon the lieutenant that reminded him that he was a full-fledged officer in the Royal Navy.

"To my home?" he asked, with surprise and evident pleasure.

"Yes; is it so very strange?"

"Yes; visitors seldom go there, Lady Lucille."

"I have been there before, sir."

"True, but it was then in the kindness of your heart upon errands of mercy, and which I can never forget."

"You said to-day that your saving my life but canceled the debt you supposed you owed me because, in common humanity, I cared for your mother when she was ill."

"But for you she would have died."

"Well, I am on my way to your home to tell your mother the story of to-day, the splendid pluck you showed, and all that you did."

"I have told her, Lady Lucille."

"Not as it should be told, for I know your modesty, lieutenant."

"Why, I'll wager you your epaulettes against the first rebel flag you haul down from our enemy's deck, that you did not tell your mother that you were a lieutenant in the King's Navy?"

"You have lost, then, Lady Lucille, for I did tell her so."

"Yes, I owe you your epaulettes; but did you tell her that you were to go to-morrow on duty?"

"I did."

"What does she say about it?"

"My mother never complains when duty calls me away."

"Well, you will at least be near home, in the coast cruiser, and as an officer can often visit her."

"Still I have to tell her my story, that she may see what a modest son she has."

"I beg of you not to do so, for, candidly, I did not tell her of the second leap from the cliff; but then, Lady Lucille, I believe that you understand me, in that second risk, that I sought to avoid thanks, and to do so could only go the way I did, for to swim around in that wild sea was impossible."

"I had crept up the cliff, when a boy, at that very point, several times, when your family were away from Elm Haven, and I did not see why I could not do so as a man, for I did not know that the rocks had washed so."

"That was why I did it, and it caused all that trouble, so I had to come out and say why."

"I understand your motive thoroughly, lieutenant, and I will go on to see your mother from a sense of duty, for I owe it to her to tell her of your magnificent courage, and to tell her that I shall do all in my power to advance your career in the future, as a slight token of my gratitude."

"But, now let me speak to you upon a subject that worries me, and I hope that you will not be offended with me for doing so."

"Offended with you, Lady Lucille?"

"I hope that you will not be; but I have heard that you never tolerate a reference to your dead father."

"Ah!"

There was much in the expression, and Lucille did not understand it; but she had come for a double purpose, and she determined not to be turned from it, so said:

"Yes, and you are doubtless well aware of the rumors regarding his ghost being seen both afloat and ashore?"

"I have heard such stories, Lady Lucille."

"Now, I am not superstitious, at least I try not to be, and have always ridiculed such ideas, and believed them imaginative wholly, but I must believe my own eyes, Lieutenant Conrad, especially when I know that I am wide awake."

"And what have you seen, Lady Lucille?" was the quick, and Lucille thought, anxious question.

"I saw one day, some two months ago, while riding in the forest, a man's form clad in white."

"My groom, Lennox, was with me, and he uttered a cry of terror, and the form looked at him in silence and then glided away."

"Two days after, you may remember, poor Lennox was thrown from his horse and killed, and it is said that evil or death always follows a sight of your—I beg pardon—this ghostly form, be it what it may."

"I have heard such foolish stories, Lady Lucille, but why should you suppose a man in white, seen in the forest in broad daylight, to be my father's ghost?"

"Because, Lieutenant Conrad, the man I saw was strikingly like you."

"You have his form, his bearing, his dark face, only his was terribly stern, yet I saw you look that very way to-day."

"You were near enough to see his face, then?"

"Oh, yes, I was not thirty feet from him, and he did indeed have such a weird look that reminded me of death."

"Have you seen this form a second time, Lady Lucille?"

"I have."

He slightly started at this, but calmly asked:

"Will you tell me when?"

"Last night."

"Ah! and where?"

"It was moonlight, you know, and a party of officers were visiting at the mansion, and as they departed my father and I, lured by the beauty of the night, walked with them up toward the fort."

"I was with Captain Lucas Moore, and he asked me to walk around by the cliff and take a look at the ocean."

"I did so, while Sir George walked on with Lieutenant Paul Pearley and the others."

"We approached the large pine standing near the cliff, and both of us saw at the same time a boat lying motionless upon the sea, just where the yacht to-day went down."

"It is a fine fishing-ground, Lady Lucille, so it was doubtless some fishermen."

"No, for the boat was white, the oars were white, and there was but one form in it, and he, too, was dressed in white."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, and it was the same one I saw in the forest that day."

"Did he remain there?"

"No, for Captain Moore hailed, and he rowed away in silence, and watching him, we saw him pull into the inlet and disappear, and you know that poor captain died to-day, lost at that very spot, and so the ill-omened warning has been twice carried out to my knowledge, so what am I to think, Lieutenant Conrad?"

"I hardly know what to say to you, Lady Lucille; but the happenings that have followed are startling and strange, to say the least about them."

"But I pray you to drive the matter from your thoughts, for there are not, *cannot be*, such things as ghosts."

"No, no, our life once gone, our spirits can never return to earth."

"Think of this no more, Lady Lucille, I beg of you."

"I will try not to; but it is getting late and I must ride on and see your mother."

"Sir George and I go up to Boston next week by the Sea Fox, so I will see you then if not before."

"Good-by," and holding out her hand it was grasped warmly but with respect by the sailor, and she then sped on at a gallop.

When he returned to the house half an hour after Lady Lucille was gone, but it was very evident that she had told his mother of all his splendid courage, for she said reproachfully, as she kissed him:

"You did not tell me the half, Cecil."

"I did not wish to worry you, mother; but which way did Lady Lucille return?"

"By the shore path, as it was late; but you will go on board the English cruiser to-morrow?"

"Yes, mother, I will be a king's officer to-morrow; but what the future has in store for me Heaven only knows," and there was much of bitterness in the tone of the young sailor as he uttered the words.

CHAPTER XI.

A KING'S OFFICER.

THE next morning after the rescue of the Lady Lucille and Captain Burnett, the officer of the deck on board the schooner-of-war Sea Fox, saw a lightly built surf-skiff running rapidly into the basin under sail.

The sloop-of-war had sailed the day before, so that the schooner was alone in the harbor, but for the pleasure-craft belonging to Elm Haven Manor.

In the stern of the surf-skiff sat a young man, his hand upon the tiller, and he was dressed in sailor garb.

Amidships was a negro of small size, and whose face indicated that he was a native African.

"Putty ship! jest like one that stole me and Kaloo from Africk."

"Glad Congo was stole, heap glad, for have big good home here with missus."

So said the negro, and the reply of Cecil Conrad was:

"Yes, I am glad you were stolen, Congo, for you have been a true friend to us, you and Marm Kaloo."

"But I'll hail now," and raising his voice he shouted in sharp tones that had the ring to them of one born to command:

"Ho, the Sea Fox, ahoy!"

"Ay, ay! ho the surf-skiff," responded the young officer.

"I am Cecil Conrad, sir, and wish to come on board to assume my duties as an officer."

"Ay, ay, Lieutenant Conrad, come aboard,

sir," came the response, and running alongside the young coaster sprung out on the gangway, while Congo placed his kit on board, and with a grasp of the hand took the tiller and headed the surf-skiff homeward.

Cecil was received at the gangway by the officer of the deck who gave him a welcome, and led him aft, the men politely saluting as they passed, for they admired pluck even in an American as they knew the new officer to be.

In the large and comfortable cabin sat Commander Jules Girard, and he arose and greeted the American most cordially, while he remarked:

"I am glad to welcome you as an officer, Lieutenant Conrad, and feel that we shall be friends."

"Your quarters are ready for you, and the ship's tailor has orders already to rig you out in a uniform, and in fact may have one to suit you, as we keep extras on hand."

"Thank you, sir, for your kindness, and may I ask when I go on duty?"

"You will need coaching, of course, life on a vessel-of-war being new to you."

"Pardon me, sir, but I served for one year as pilot on a vessel-of-war, and another year my time was divided as quartermaster, gunner and boatswain, so I am not wholly unacquainted with the duties aboard ship."

"I am glad of this and it will not take you long then to drop into the routine of our sea-life; but here is the tailor, sir."

"May I ask if you have heard from Captain Burnett this morning, Commander Girard?"

"Yes, and he is not as well as we could wish, for the captain is a popular man aboard ship."

"His arm troubles him, and his condition is low from exhaustion; but I hope he'll soon pull through."

"I sincerely hope so, sir; but may I also ask if the Lady Lucille suffered from the effects of her mishap?"

"No, for I saw her on horseback early this morning riding along the shore."

"You are a fortunate man, Conrad, to have saved one so beautiful."

"I only regret, sir, that I could not have saved Captain Moore."

"Yes, and he is to be buried this afternoon late, and if as Tailor Burd here says he can fit you out in a uniform, I wish you to command the men who go ashore to the funeral."

"Thank you, sir, for the honor—there, this uniform does just fit me."

"Yes, and you look every inch a sailor in it."

"You were born for a king's officer, Conrad; but let me ask you, if it is not a private affair, what the grudge is that Sir George Harwood holds against you?"

"A simple thing, sir, not worth mentioning, for it began when I was a hot-headed boy."

"In Sir George's apple-orchard, eh?"

"Not exactly; he believed me to be on his land and ordered me off, and I convinced him that he was the trespasser."

"Yes, convinced him in a way, doubtless, that he has never forgotten. Ha! ha! ha!"

"I wish I could have seen it, for I like a joke, and General Sir George is so dignified; but he should never forget you after yesterday's work. There, Conrad, permit me to say that you look positively splendid in your full uniform, and you wear it like one born in it; but it is something, as Tailor Burd said, to have a form to fit."

"Why, we will have to keep you ashore when in port, or we ordinary-looking fellows will stand no chance with the girls," and Commander Girard gave an admiring glance in the large cabin mirror at his own handsome face and form.

Going to his room Conrad soon made himself comfortable, and at twelve o'clock reported on deck to relieve the officer there.

Commander Girard was there and at once presented him to the other officers of the ship and then to the men in a neat little speech, and three cheers were given with a will for:

"The new officer."

If those watching expected to see awkwardness in Cecil Conrad on his first duty, they were disappointed, for in the two years that he had been upon three different vessels-of-war, from pilot on a frigate to quartermaster on a brig, and boatswain on a schooner, he had studied the duty of every one on board ship, from the captain down to the powder-monkeys and cabin-boys.

"I will some day command a vessel myself," had been in his thoughts, and the result of his studies was that he knew a vessel from keel to truck perfectly, and the duty of every man.

Then, too, he had been mate on a coaster, and had commanded his own little shallop with a crew of four men, when running freights and passengers from Boston to Portland, so that he was by no means new on a ship's deck.

This the men at once realized as they saw him take up the quiet quarter-deck pace, and cast his eyes over the vessel.

As the crew were to go ashore to the funeral at eight bells, the end of Cecil Conrad's "watch," the orders were issued for them to be in full dress, and have the boats ready, and when the new lieutenant was relieved by another officer, and a few minutes after returned on deck

ready to take the crew to the funeral of Captain Burnett, Commander Girard said:

"Conrad, I am proud of you, for you have not had a single hitch in all that you have done."

"Thank you, sir, and I have to report all ready, sir, to go ashore."

"Well, you take command, and I will follow with Lieutenant Jayne."

"Ay, ay, sir," and with a salute the young officer went over the side into his waiting boat, and gave the order promptly:

"Let fall, men! Give way!"

As the five boats left the side a minute-gun belched forth its deep-voiced note of woe for the dead officer, and back from the fort on the little hill came an answering gun, telling that the duties of burying the gallant captain had begun.

Landing, the men were formed in platoons, with a midshipman in command of each, and with muffled drums and the shrill wailing of the fife, began their march up to the fort.

Reaching the plateau, Sir George, in the full uniform of a British general, with several of his staff, who were stationed at the fort, following, and Lady Lucille on his arm, moved away from the mansion and wended their steps toward the fort.

The minute-gun, deep and somber, and the light gun on the fort, sharp and rattling in its sound, kept firing regularly, while the crew of the Sea Foe marched solemnly to the mournful dirge of the fife and drums.

As Sir George halted at the fort the crew moved by, Cecil Conrad leading, his form upright, but head bowed and sword reversed, but his whole bearing that of the perfect officer.

Sir George fairly started at the sight, and muttered to Lady Lucille:

"See there, my child, it is wonderful, for I supposed him a lout!"

It told Sir George plainly that the American was his equal now, in spite of his wish to the contrary, and it formed in his heart some disagreeable reflections that caused him to grit his teeth hard together.

CHAPTER XII.

ON THE VERGE OF DOOM.

THE body of the dead captain was laid in the grave, in a little glen where was the burying-ground of Elm Haven, and the deep roar of the guns sounded a last farewell to the gallant dead.

Back to the shore marched the crew of the Sea Foe, under command of a midshipman, while Cecil Conrad sauntered along alone, having declined an invitation with Commander Girard to dine at Elm Haven Mansion, for Sir George was too polite a man to leave the new officer out when the request had been for the "senior officers to remain and take dinner at the mansion."

"Lieutenant Conrad begged me to thank you, Sir George, for the honor done him, but, as I told him we were to sail to-morrow, he asked to go and say good-by to his mother," said Jules Girard.

Sir George was pleased, but said:

"Ah, yes, he wishes to show her how he looks in a king's uniform."

"And he certainly looks splendidly, Sir George," the commander said, for he saw that the baronet did not like to hear the young American praised.

"Humph! Yes, he will take to his new feathers better than I thought; but you sail from here to Portland, Girard?"

"Yes, Sir George, and Captain Burnett sent orders to hold myself at your command."

"Thanks. I have to go to the marine department to inspect the troops there, and to see to defenses, and I have promised Lady Lucille she should accompany me, if you can make room for us."

"Certainly, sir, Captain Burnett's cabin is at your service and we will all be honored to have the Lady Lucille as our guest."

"When will you sail, sir?"

"At your leisure to-morrow, Commander Girard," was the reply, and when he bade his guests farewell that night, the general muttered to himself:

"I forgot that American officer was on board when I promised Lucille she should accompany me."

At the hour of sailing the next day it was Cecil Conrad's watch, and so the duty of getting under way devolved upon him.

But nothing disconcerted by the watching officers and wondering men, and the presence of Sir George and Lady Lucille, with four of the British general's staff on board, Cecil Conrad did not make a miss order, or hesitate a second, while his splendid voice rung out in a way that caused all to feel that he was born for the quarter-deck.

"He has the best voice aboard ship, Lady Lucille, the very voice for a battle and a storm."

"I am proud of him," said Commander Jules Girard, as the large and beautiful schooner went bowling out to sea under a cloud of canvas.

The Sea Foe was indeed a beauty, the pet of the English fleet in American waters.

She was Americans built, and a clipper in model, while she carried canvas enough for a six-

hundred ton craft, her own measurement being three hundred and fifty tons.

Her crew numbered a hundred and thirty men, and she carried a heavy armament of ten guns, four of which were pivots mounted fore, aft and amidships and of large caliber.

A more beautiful vessel a man would not wish to command, and so Captain Godfrey Burnett thought as he lay in his bed by the window in Elm Haven Mansion, and saw his beautiful vessel get under way.

He had been left in charge of the schooner's assistant surgeon, and was in hopes of rapidly improving, for there had been a change for the better.

"Whose watch is it, Morgan?" he asked the surgeon, as he saw the Sea Foe preparing to sail.

"I heard, sir, that the new officer was to have the deck and get her under way."

"That's it then, for as fine an officer as Girard is, I never saw such work as that before even under my own command."

"By Neptune, Morgan, but that young American will be an admiral before I am, and I am in luck to have him aboard, for he is said to know the coast perfectly from the Delaware to the Penobscot."

"You were in luck to have him ashore day before yesterday, captain," significantly remarked the surgeon.

"In truth you are right, I was, for he saved me from death, and such a swimmer—why the fellow is a fish, Morgan, a perfect fish, and I do not believe you could drown him after what I saw yesterday."

"Something of a bird too, captain, from the two flights he took yesterday," said the surgeon, who never allowed a chance to slip to make a point in conversation.

"Right you are again, Morgan, for what a flight that was."

"I saw him take the first leap, and he came down feet foremost as calm as you please."

"Neptune's ghost! but that man is a marvel! I only hope he won't take an idea to fall in love with Lady Lucille and win her."

"If he does there will be plenty of miserable ones, Captain Burnett—besides yourself," and the last two words the surgeon wisely uttered sotto voce.

"See there, Morgan, how he handles the craft, and he running her out under full canvas through the dangerous channel."

"See who has the wheel."

The surgeon turned the captain's glass upon the flying schooner and said:

"The American, sir."

"Good! with him on board the Sea Foe has new laurels to win, and I must hurry and get well so as to resume command and not let Girard have all the glory."

"I give you just three weeks, Morgan, to get me into perfect trim again."

"Yes, sir," responded the surgeon, but he muttered to himself:

"Not if Surgeon Matt Morgan knows himself, will he leave these elegant quarters and lordly living for a bunk and ships' food, until he has to do so."

"No, no, Lady Lucille will be back within a couple of weeks, and Matt Morgan lays claim to being his captain's rival in that quarter."

"Some one must win the beautiful heiress, so why not I?"

The Sea Foe in the meanwhile had gained an offing, and laid her course down the coast.

The wind was fresh, the sea not rough, and the fleet schooner went along at a tremendous pace.

"Lieutenant Conrad, I congratulate you, upon your skillful seamanship," said Lady Lucille as "eight bells" told that it was four o'clock, and Cecil Conrad went off duty.

"Thank you, Lady Lucille."

"I am glad to see that you suffered no ill effects from your adventure, for I was fearful that you might," and the manner of the young officer was as unembarrassed as though he had been accustomed to entertaining pretty women on the quarter-deck all his life.

That night it came on to blow hard, and when dawn came the schooner was scudding on an easterly course before a hurricane.

Late in the afternoon, when Cecil Conrad was below, gaining rest after his duties of the night before, Commander Girard, as the gale still continued, headed in-shore for an anchorage, which he found by hailing a pilot who came on board and ran him in among a group of islands.

The pilot after dropping anchor had bailed his sloop and gone to one of the islands, he said, where he lived, for the gale being off-shore the sea was not very rough a league off the land.

He promised to come off by sunset and pilot the schooner out when the hurricane had gone down.

When the sun was nearing the horizon, the storm-clouds deepened in hue, and the wind began to sweep rapidly around to seaward.

Where the anchorage had been perfectly quiet before, and it was believed that the island the schooner was under the lee of would protect her, a dangerous chop sea now came rushing in and the vessel tugged hard at her anchor.

Another anchor was let fall, but the current

between the islands and the mainland was terrible, and with the sea now rushing in giant waves shoreward, the fury of the tempest increasing and night coming on, it looked bad indeed for the schooner.

"Fire a signal gun, Jayne, and bring that pilot off at once," said commander Girard anxiously, and his anxiety was now beginning to be felt by all, who felt that they were in a very dangerous place.

While the echoes of the gun were dashing along the rocky shores, Cecil Conrad came on deck.

His face was serene, but he had come at the sound of the gun.

At once he heard the reason of the firing, and glancing quickly about him, he stepped to the side of Jules Girard and said in a low earnest tone:

"Commander Girard, you have entered in what is known on this coast as Hell's Gateway, and unless you get out, the schooner and all on board are doomed!"

CHAPTER XIII.

AT THE HELM.

THERE is something intuitive in our notions, that causes us to read each others thoughts at certain moments of excitement and danger.

And so it was with all who saw Cecil Conrad speak to Commander Girard.

The young man's manner was as serene as a May morning, and he had spoken without any show of excitement in his voice; but Sir George, Lady Lucille, and the officers of the vessel, had all read that he had given a warning, and one in deadly earnest.

"You know the place, Conrad?"

"Yes, sir."

"I signaled a pilot I saw in-shore, and he brought me in here and said it was a perfectly safe anchorage."

"The gale was off-shore then, sir?"

"Yes."

"It has now swept around to seaward, is increasing each moment, as is also the sea, and the position of these islands, with the reefs and rock-bound coast, make the waters here particularly dangerous, and I have heard of a score of wrecks right here where your vessel is."

"Once the gale gets to its full height, and the sea into its full fury, your vessel would not hold with a dozen anchors out, and she would be driven against yonder cliffs and dashed to pieces, for the water is deep there and no power could save her."

"But I am firing for the pilot now."

"Where did he go?"

"To yonder island, where he lives."

"Commander Girard, it is not so, for only in the calmest weather can a landing be made on yonder island, and there is no house there, for I was there not three months ago, when I ran in here in my little coaster and got becalmed for days."

"But the pilot must hear our guns?"

"Did he ask for pay, sir?"

"Yes, to take it to his wife, he said, as he was going on a cruise for weeks after piloting us to sea again."

"He deceived you, sir."

"Deceived me, Conrad?"

"Yes, sir, the man will not come off."

"But why?"

"Well, sir, to be frank with you, he is an American, and this schooner is a king's craft."

"By Heaven I understand you now."

"He is a rebel."

"An American, sir, and perhaps a wrecker, so as he has the money in hand for running you in here, he will be the better off for letting you go to pieces that he may enrich himself upon the wreckage."

"While he will have the satisfaction of wrecking a king's craft, with some hundred and fifty souls on board?"

"That is the way it looks to me, Commander Girard."

"Then by Heaven we are doomed, for never did I see such a fearful channel to run as the one we came in."

"And poor Lady Lucille on board."

"Great God, Conrad, our anchors won't hold!"

"Against such seas, sir, and such a tempest as is now rising they cannot, sir; but I will take the helm, if you wish, and carry you out to sea, as it is our only course."

"Ha! you know the coast then?"

"Not so well as I could wish, sir, but I have run in here a score of times on my voyages in the little Surf Angel, and once took a brig through of which I was second mate, for the captain also ran in here under the idea that he could ride out a storm."

"Conrad, it is our only hope, and if you save this vessel, save Lady Lucille from death, and my gallant officers and crew, I will resign in your favor and see that Jayne does the same, for you are just as fit to command a vessel as either of us, and you shall step up as you deserve to do."

"Thank you, Commander Girard, but I neither seek, or ask reward for doing my duty, nor would I accept the slightest sacrifice upon the part of yourself or Lieutenant Jayne."

"The schooner is doomed, with all on board, if she remains here, and I will do all in my power to take her out."

"God bless you, Conrad."

"We have no time to lose, sir, for see how the wind and sea are increasing, and darkness is upon us, and if the lightning does not aid us it will be intense."

"The ship is in your hands, Lieutenant Conrad."

Those who had watched this conversation had seen the calm serenity upon the face of the young American, and heard his even tones, while they had remarked the anxiety depicted upon the countenance of the commander, and that his voice quivered, and, at times, was earnest to excitement.

Jules Girard was no coward, and a more thorough officer was hard to find, and with another in command he would have been unruffled.

But he knew the whole responsibility was upon him, and a hundred and a half lives hung upon what he did, with the fate of the beautiful craft under his command.

Then too the beautiful eyes of Lady Lucille appealed to him as for protection, while Sir George, a general in the British Army, was also in his keeping.

"Take her, Conrad, and do your best," and with these words the commander glanced over his ship.

Sir George was anxious, but calm, and Lady Lucille realized just what was going on, as did all else on the deck of the schooner.

And all eyes turned upon the American, for they knew now that in him alone was their only hope.

He glanced over the schooner critically, and his first order rang out sharp and stern:

"House topmasts!"

Then came the command to firmly lash the guns and clear the decks of all things not needed for working the craft.

The hatches were battened down then, and the men ordered to their posts, when a sail was being set the men forward were hauling in on the anchors.

The mainsail was reefed a couple of points, and the foresail was reefed down, while forward a storm-sail was set, for Conrad said aloud:

"She must carry this canvas to make her work well against the gale."

"Will she do it?" asked Commander Girard.

"She must, and I have other canvas ready to set should this blow away," was the stern rejoinder, for the young American sailor had now risen to meet the situation in all his might and manhood.

"It would be better, Sir George, if you would go below with Lady Lucille, for we will be swept outside by some terrible seas," said Cecil Conrad quietly, as he approached the general and his daughter.

"She will not go, sir," and Sir George glanced at Lucille, who said earnestly:

"No, no, I cannot, for it would seem as though I was in my coffin, and Lizette, my poor maid, wails so in her fright."

"Let me stay, good Master Cecil—I beg pardon, I mean Lieutenant Conrad."

In the last glimmer of light Lucille saw the young man smile at her mistake, and then he said:

"Yes, you can stay; but both Sir George and yourself must be lashed in the companionway."

"Here, Lieutenant Jayne, please see to it that Sir George and his daughter are firmly lashed, and also that the men not needed for working the ship are also kept at the man-ropes."

"Ay, ay, sir," and the superior officer obeyed the inferior then, and with alacrity, for the American showed himself then and there the master of the situation, the ruling spirit, and to him Jules Girard set the example by yielding perfect obedience.

It was now dark, and as the anchors left the bottom the schooner gained headway and forged ahead, held straight up toward the island, while the anchors were being lashed.

"All ready, sir!" came in Jules Girard's voice from forward, for he had gone to see that the anchors were firmly lashed, and all was in readiness for the struggle.

"Ay, ay, sir."

"Come aft, please, Commander Girard, and help with the wheel!" and the American sailor, so suddenly become a king's officer, grasped the wheel of the schooner and headed her into the terrible fight for life.

CHAPTER XIV.

FIGHTING THE TEMPEST.

THE good schooner proved her worth, when she shot out like a storm-bird from under the shelter of the rocky island under whose lee she had anchored, and felt the full force of the winds and waves.

There was not one on board but felt that she would have gone to destruction had she remained where she was, for the sea seemed to come from every direction, causing her to lurch, plunge and override her cables, and already had she begun to drag them when she would sag back with full force upon them.

When the tempest increased, the doom of the

schooner would have been certain had she remained there, and this all realized.

As she met the thundering seas and sweeping winds, she bent low to them, and seemed trying to hide behind the crested billows.

All breathlessly had stood and watched the sails.

Would the canvas hold against such a wind?

Such was the question upon every lip.

But, quick as a flash, the bows were brought up and the strain relieved, and then the trained seamen knew that the man at the helm knew what he was about, and into the teeth of the tempest they hurled a defiant cheer.

By the wheel stood Jules Girard upon the starboard, with Emmet Jayne to port, ready to lend their aid when called upon; but thus far the remarkable strength of the American had done the work unaided, and, if one man had the power to manage the ship, it was better than having other hands upon the wheel.

The darkness was now so dense that one seemed blind, and gladly noted the next vivid flash of lightning to prove that they were not indeed so.

How it was possible for the man at the wheel to see they did not know, and memory came to all on board of having seen as they came in a sunken rock here, a bold reef there, or a tiny island.

Could the Sea Foe find her way out into the ocean through such dangers, while going into the teeth of the hurricane and having to battle with giant waves, rushing like vast divisions on a charge upon the rock-bound shore.

If the schooner did escape, the skill, coolness and nerve of one man must save her, and upon him was now turned every eye, with each vivid glare of lightning.

And he, the American officer in the service of a king who was then waging war upon the Colonies, knew his responsibility and accepted it.

His eyes were upon the sea ahead in one flash, then to starboard in the next, to port in the third, and astern when a fourth vivid glare came.

He managed his vessel perfectly, knew what to expect from the seas and winds, felt her power of resistance and fight against the odds, but in these constant glances out over the waters marked the dangers, took in his position and held unwaveringly upon his way.

"Breakers ahead!" came in a frenzied tone from the lookout, who had suddenly discovered a wall of foam almost under the bows.

But the eyes of the helmsman had some time before seen the danger, while they had also noted breakers to port, and that the schooner could not there go up into the wind and about.

So he held on, while every heart seemed to beat, and it appeared that a quarter of a minute more must wreck the ship.

Then came the stern, resolute order, heard by all:

"Ready about! Hard, hard down the helm!"

The men sprung to their duties, and Commander Jules Girard threw himself with full weight upon the wheel to aid the bold helmsman.

In spite of the tumbling seas, and the winds, the Sea Foe swept her bows away from the threatened breakers, and falling around of the port tack, dashed through the break in the reef, and with not half her length to spare upon the lee side.

Like a mad racer she flew, and all wondered if the canvas would stand the strain.

If it parted, then down upon the ragged reef the schooner must go broadside and death to all must quickly follow.

But the canvas stood the strain, fearful as it was, and each moment carried the schooner further out to sea.

There was a chain of islands ahead, some with good depth and distance between them, through which the Sea Foe could find her way into open water, and others with connecting reefs that would be destruction to dash upon.

In that darkness, mad sea and tempestuous winds, would the man at the wheel be able to find the right channel through the islands?

Did he do so, then he must be guided by more than human intelligence, for to others all appeared alike.

"There's a pass between those two larger islands, sir, that looks clear," shouted a junior officer from forward.

"Silence, sir!"

The stern command broke from the lips of the helmsman in a way that showed he would brook no interference.

He was the one to be responsible, and his life was at stake with the others.

He would take his own way of getting out of danger.

So the schooner drove by the pass between the two islands like a race-horse, and very near to them.

Those who saw the pass widen, in the now almost constant glare of the lightning, seemed to feel that the helmsman was going wrong, that he was making a mistake, for certainly it seemed so.

"Stubborn fool! why does he not listen to advice?" growled Sir George.

"I suppose because he knows what that officer only suspects," replied Lady Lucille.

"Any fool could see that the pass between those islands is the right one— Hal! he has come to his senses, has he?" and the last remark of Sir George Harwood was at hearing the order to go upon the other tack.

On dashed the schooner, at first it seemed for the pass between the two islands, but then it became evident that she was being held closer and closer into the gale, as if to go between the nearest large island and a small one.

As she drew nearer it could be seen that there was no passage way between the two larger islands.

All was a mass of sunken rocks; but on the nearer end, which was a bold cliff, and between that and a cedar-clad island two hundred feet away, the waves came bounding through, unbroken by sunken rocks.

"Lieutenant Conrad was right, father," said Lady Lucille, with almost malicious triumph, as now all saw by the incessant lightning that had he attempted the other passage it would have been to go to destruction.

Sir George gave a sigh of relief, but made no reply, and he, with others, shuddered as the schooner rushed by the cliff, and so near that it seemed the end of the mainboom hardly cleared it.

On, on, swept the schooner, until the chain of islands had been left far to leeward, and then came the command:

"Quartermasters to the wheel!"

Turning to those crouching in the companionway, as he was relieved from the wheel, Cecil Conrad said, cheerily:

"You have only the winds and waves to dread now, Lady Lucille, and with this staunch schooner you need hold no fear."

"Only the winds and the waves," cried Lady Lucille. "But they are terrible."

"Yet nothing to what the danger was ten minutes ago."

"Conrad, you are a master seaman, and have a nerve of iron."

"You have saved the ship, and each and all of us owe you our lives, while the king owes you a debt he will willingly pay," and Commander Girard grasped the hand of the young man who had proven such a daring and skillful pilot, while three cheers, loud, ringing and full of gratitude and admiration went from the quarter-deck to the fore-castle of the rescued schooner.

CHAPTER XV.

BROUGHT TO BAY.

THROUGH the long hours of the night the Sea Foe plunged, crunched and struggled with the waters.

As Cecil Conrad was in charge of the deck, Lady Lucille obeyed his bidding and sought her state-room.

She was a fine sailor, and with the young American in charge of the deck, she seemed to feel that there was safety, and so she went below.

Sir George, in a reserved sort of way, had congratulated Conrad upon his splendid nerve, and then spoiled it all by adding:

"I suppose, after all, it was not half so bad as it looked to one who is not a sailor."

"On the contrary, Sir George, it was far more to a sailor's eye, for we knew our full danger, and as I said before, the skill and courage of Conrad alone saved us," responded Commander Girard, who was nettled by the persistent dislike of Sir George toward the American.

"There is something back of all this that Conrad, if he knows, does not make known."

"It cannot be that he is an American, for Sir George married an American lady, though I confess he is bitter toward them— Ah! can it be that there is something between the young man and Lady Lucille that does not appear upon the surface?"

"In that case I would have cause to dislike Conrad, for I will not give up the Lady Lucille without a desperate struggle, even to my captain, and I was awful glad she did not remain behind to comfort Burnett with his broken arm."

So mused Commander Girard, and the new thought concerning Lady Lucille and Cecil Conrad gave him something more to dwell upon than he really liked.

When dawn came the gale had blown itself out, and the wind had fallen to a ten-knot breeze.

The sea yet ran high, but no longer in such giant waves, and the sun rose in a clear sky.

Land was not in sight, but the ship was put away on her course for Portland, and a sigh of relief came from each one, officer and man, as he came on deck and saw the situation so changed from the day and night before.

It was after eight o'clock when Lady Lucille came on deck, and as she did so the lookout on the foretop sung out:

"Land, ho!"

"You and land appear at the same time, Lady Lucille."

"I trust you are well this morning," said Cecil Conrad, politely raising his cap, for he had come on deck but a moment before, and been greeted with a salute by all, and one which

meant unmistakable admiration for him as a man, an officer, and a sailor.

"I am heartily glad to hear the cry of 'Land, ho!' for after my last night's experience I am glad of a chance to go ashore," said the maiden, and Commander Girard remarked:

"What will be your gain, Lady Lucille, will be our misfortune in losing you."

"Yes, we will regret to lose you, lady, for you were the ship's good angel last night," and as Cecil Conrad spoke, Jules Girard eyed both him and the maiden closely, to note if he could discover any glance between them that might mean that they knew each other better than was supposed.

But the sailor's face was serene, and Lady Lucille simply said:

"I was a very much frightened good angel, as you are pleased to call me, Lieutenant Conrad; but here is papa, and he will be also glad to reach the shore, though it will be with regret at parting with such kind friends."

"If she did love him I could hardly blame her, after all he has done for her, and then, too, what a deuced handsome fellow he is—the very man to break a woman's heart," and Jules Girard turned to tell Sir George that they would land in Portland soon after noon.

The breeze held well, and after an early dinner on the Sea Foe, Sir George and his daughter were put on shore, the young commander promising to return for them within a month, and at once put to sea in his vessel on a cruise.

A few days after the appointed time the Sea Foe again put into the harbor of Portland, and Sir George and Lady Lucille took passage on her for Boston, where the craft was to remain some time and undergo repairs.

Obtaining leave of absence for a while, Cecil Conrad started for home by stage.

The report of the cruise of the Sea Foe was sent ashore by Jules Girard to the admiral, and Cecil Conrad was made the bearer.

He was greeted pleasantly by Lord Chauncey, who said:

"I have already heard of your splendid work in saving the schooner, Conrad, for Commander Girard addressed me a letter from Portland, and as the king allows me certain discretionary powers, as commander here, I intend to present to you, as from his Majesty, a special decoration for signal services rendered, and now make you one of a very select gathering of brave men who have the honor to wear the Diamond Anchor."

"Did I promote you so soon after your appointment, you being an American, it might gain the ill-will for you of some of our young officers; but where you have, by signal service, won marked recognition, I feel that I can now place upon your heart the Diamond Anchor, with all that the insignia implies."

As he spoke the admiral took from its morocco case a diamond-studded anchor, swung by gold chains to a king's crown, and pinned it upon the breast of the young sailor.

For a moment Cecil Conrad shrunk back, but then as he noticed the eyes of a score of assembled officers or distinction in the British Army and Navy were upon him, he stood his ground, bowed low, and said in a distinct, firm voice:

"I feel deeply honored, Admiral Chauncey, by your kindness to me, and shall endeavor to serve my country and its ruler faithfully."

Remembering this little speech afterward, Admiral Chauncey remarked to Sir George:

"Egad, I recall now that the cunning fellow never said *king* or *England* once, but *country* and *its ruler*."

Taking the stage from Boston, Cecil Conrad was put out at the tavern in the little village, near his home, and as it had become generally known that he had entered the king's service, anything but kindly glances were cast upon him, and those who had been ever ready to give him a greeting, now returned a very cold bow to his greeting, some not even speaking at all.

Going to the harbor shore he called to a boatman and said:

"Ho, Skipper Stetson, I wish to get one of your crew to take me and my kit up home."

"Me and my crew, youngster?"

"Well, I'm all there is o' my crew, for the cursed Britishers captured the vessel last week, and pressed the poor boys into service, so I'm left poor, and old age not far away from me, nuther."

"I am sorry to hear this, skipper."

"Sorry; no you ben't, if yer wears that cussed uniform."

"But king's gold is good, I guesses, and as you is a lieutenant, they tell me, I'll take yer if yer pays well, for I needs ther money."

"I'll give you half a sovereign, skipper."

"Waal, yer hain't lost yer generosity and manners, if yer do be a Englishman."

"I'll do it, so get yer kit down here, and I'll have my boat ready."

Back to the tavern went the young officer, and calling to a strapping fellow, who happened to be the bully of the village, he said:

"Saul, help me down with my kit to Skipper Stetson's boat, and here's half a crown for you."

"Your kit be blowed, Cecil Conrad, and you too, for I don't tech traitors' money."

"What do you mean?" was the calm query, and a crowd gathered quickly.

"I means that you is an infernal Britisher, a traitor to yer home and yer people."

"And you are a liar, Saul Sutton—take that!"

With a stunning blow the sailor sent Saul Sutton reeling and down, and then, as he was turning away, he heard a cry of warning, and looking over his shoulder, saw Saul's brother, Tim, also a large man, a sailor, and known as a desperate character, rushing upon him, with his knife drawn.

Quickly he turned, and his sword flashed from its scabbard, and with a quick motion the knife was knocked from the hand of his assailant, who gave a howl of rage and pain as two of his fingers were severed by the sharp blade, and fell upon the ground.

"Kill him, mates, for he is a king's cox!" shouted Saul, who, having regained his feet, was now rushing forward, also with uplifted knife, while Tim Sutton yelled:

"Yes, kill him, mates, kill him, for he has clipped my hand in two!"

With a spring Cecil Conrad reached the tavern wall, placed his back against it, and, with his sword ready to meet the attack of the now enraged crowd, said:

"Men, I am no traitor to my people or country, and I warn you off, for I will not be cut down by a lot of mad fools!"

"Back, I say!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CAPTAIN'S DAUGHTER.

THE crowd were brought to a halt by his bold stand, and having already seen what use he could make of his sword, they had no desire to press him within its reach.

But Saul Sutton came forward, and called to his brother to "doctor" his wound after he had killed "the traitor American."

This aroused the anger of the crowd to a high pitch, and they seized a long bench and were preparing to rush in upon the young officer, when he drew from its holster a pistol, and said:

"Men, I shall use this if you advance a step nearer with that bench."

Again the crowd hesitated, for they knew Cecil Conrad's reputation as a dead shot.

But Tim Sutton called out:

"You must take ther chances o' his hittin' yer, as I did, mates, and he kin hit but one, anyhow. Come along!"

With a yell, and the long bench raised upon their shoulders, and extended some eight feet beyond them, they were about to make a rush, when, suddenly, out of the tavern door, glided a form, and standing in front of the young officer, called out:

"Back, you cowards, all! Back, I say, and hang your heads with shame!"

The speaker was pretty Kate Clyde, the daughter of the landlord of the Gold Anchor Inn!

The crowd halted on the instant; the long bench fell from the shoulders of those who held it!

A score of men had been warned off by a woman, a mere girl, in fact, and they obeyed.

And no wonder, for Kate Clyde was as neat a specimen of young womanhood as one would wish to see.

Her form was simply perfection, and she knew just how to dress to be attractive, for she wore a navy blue dress, with anchors worked in gold upon the broad sailor collar, and a jaunty sailor-hat that did not half hide her wealth of golden curls.

Her face was beautiful, a bright, spirited beauty that had captured the hearts of every one in the village, and made many a young gallant suffer with pain in his left side.

But for the fact that Kate Clyde had shown no marked preference for any one, there would have been half a dozen encounters a day about her among the rivals for her regard.

Old Captain Clyde, her stern old father, had been a sea-captain, and his vessel had been wrecked one night off the village, and he and his family had been saved. Kate was then a mere child, and liking the village, he had bought the tavern there and been its landlord ever since.

Mrs. Clyde was far above the captain, the gossips had said, and looked like a broken-hearted woman.

She died one night, four years after the captain came to the village, and was laid away to rest, no one knowing the story of why she had married a rough, stern man like Kit Clyde.

But Kate was his idol, and she in turn seemed devoted to her father, while the villagers stood in awe of him, as he had shown on several occasions that he was a dangerous man when aroused.

Such was the one who had come to the rescue of Cecil Conrad, and she faced the crowd with flashing eyes.

"But he's turned English, Miss Kate," said Saul Sutton with a low bow, which he meant to be graceful.

"I heard him give you the lie for saying that, and I do not believe he means to serve against us," said Kate indignantly.

Although the crowd stood in respectful attitude, they were in an ugly mood, and Tim Sut-

ton, with his wounded hand hastily bound up, was urging them on, for he well knew that with his ugly face and worse character he had no chance in the race to win Kate Clyde's hand.

What the upshot would have been it is hard to tell, but just then Captain Clyde stepped out of the tap-room.

He was a man of attractive appearance at a glance, but with a dark face that was marred by cruelty and evil.

He had never given up his sea costume, and looked like a well-to-do skipper of a clipper ship, and a man of fearlessness and determination.

"See here, lads, you don't wish any trouble with me, and if you don't do as my girl tells you, and set sail from here, you'll have it."

"I heard all, and as to Master Cecil's serving the king, that's his business if his mind runs that way, though I confess I had hoped so see him in an American navy when we get one."

"But, lads, I haven't forgotten how eight years ago when a craft I was in was wrecked off this coast one night, and how, when no man dare do it, a mere boy came off in a surf-skiff and took three of us off."

"Those three were my wife, my child and myself, and I had along my little savings in a chest, which helped me to buy this tavern and lay by some gold for my girl here."

"That's the story, lads, and the boy is now a man, and if he wore Satan's uniform, none of you are going to harm him while Kit Clyde is around."

"Do ye see?"

It was very evident that the "lads" did "see," for they began to break away, while, as though heedless of them, Cecil Conrad turned to the maiden and said:

"You prevented trouble, Miss Kate, perhaps saved my life, for they were in an ugly humor with me."

"And you too, captain, I owe my gratitude to."

"Don't speak of it, Master Cecil, for I've been your friend since that black night, and you are always welcome here in my home."

"But I confess, Master Cecil, I would rather not see you in a British uniform," earnestly said Kate.

Cecil Conrad glanced about him to see that no one else was near, and then said:

"When I accepted the commission of an officer under the king, the Colonies had not broken out in actual warfare, and I was given a lieutenancy for services rendered, as I now wear this king's decoration of the Diamond Anchor for saving a royal vessel and her crew from destruction."

"When I reached Boston I learned that hostilities had actually begun between the Colonies and the Mother Country, and I wrote my resignation, and it goes back by stage to-day to Admiral Chauncey, so that when it is accepted, I am no longer an officer in the service of Great Britain; but to you alone have I told this, my friends."

"Now, again thanking you, I must say farewell, as I am anxious to see my mother."

"I am glad indeed to hear you say what you have, Master Cecil, and I believe you will win rank in the American service too; but, father, let us walk down to the shore with Master Cecil," and Kate cast a glance over to where there were a number of the turbulent crowd standing, and evidently discussing the situation.

"Yes, and Snow shall carry your kit down," said Skipper Clyde, calling to a negro whose intensely black face had gained for him the name of Snow.

Five minutes after, Cecil Conrad was upon his way to The Refuge.

CHAPTER XVII.

SURPRISING NEWS.

FOR several days had Cecil Conrad been at home, and he was anxiously awaiting a reply from Admiral Chauncey to his letter, resigning his commission as a lieutenant in the Royal Navy.

His mother had given him a warm welcome, as also had Congo and Kaloo, and to the former he had fully explained his situation, and to her satisfaction.

He had accepted the commission because he had won it, and also because it gave him a position socially in the world.

As a king's officer he could command respect, and as such he could learn, on an armed deck, just what he wished to know of the duties of a commander, for Cecil Conrad had made up his mind to be no drone in the hive in the threatening war.

When he felt that war was inevitable, he had asked leave, and arriving at the village, had at once written his resignation and dispatched it back by the stage coach in which he had come.

What Admiral Chauncey would do about it he was not sure; but he hoped the return of his commission would be accepted and no trouble given him, and until he had reply he felt anxious regarding the future.

Still, having sent his resignation, morally severed himself from longer service under the king, he felt that he could feel heart and soul in sym-

pathy with the cause of the patriot Americans.

Two days after the return of the young sailor to The Refuge, Congo told him that Sir George Harwood and Lady Lucille had also returned home.

That same afternoon he had wandered along the shore of The Refuge inlet, when he met Paul Pearley the young hussar, who was upon a tour of inspection around the fort.

"Ah, Conrad, I am glad to see you, and you can give me some points."

"I heard you had returned, and wondered at your not coming up to the fort to see me, for I am promoted to a captaincy, and am in command since poor Moore's taking off."

"Yes, I heard in Boston of your promotion, and am glad to congratulate you, Captain Pearley."

"Thanks; but the Harwoods are back too, though the general only for a short while I believe, as he is preparing to take the field, for the rebels have started in for a war to a certainty."

"A brother of Lady Harwood's, and his wife, have come to stay at Elm Haven and take care of Lady Lucille, for they have no children, and though an American, Mr. and Mrs. Hazel are loyalists."

"But I have reason to congratulate you, too, for Lady Lucille told me all about your saving the schooner and winning the king's Diamond Anchor."

"I'd give a fortune to be the lucky dog you are, though, as an Englishman who looks a thing squarely in the face, you will pardon me if I say I do not see how an American can fight against his land and people; but how I am running on into the political rights and wrongs of this war with the Colonies, when I wished to ask your advice about putting a fort on the point here, to command the inlet?"

"You intend to strengthen your position here, sir?"

"Yes, we will keep a full light battery or company or two of infantry, and my company of hussars in the fort on the hill, while I am to decide if it will not be well to mount a battery of heavy guns on this point."

"It would hardly be necessary, sir, for no vessel could run into this inlet through the dangerous channel, without a pilot, and I know of but two besides myself that would dare bring her in, and they would not make the attempt by night, I am sure."

"But you could, of course."

"Oh, yes, Captain Pearley, I know the channel as I do the halls of my own home."

"Well, that is something to know; but about Elm Haven?"

"A battery mounted over Elm Haven, on the end of the further ridge of land, would keep a vessel out on anchorage there, for it is not difficult to run a craft in there either at night, or in a storm."

"Then the battery goes there, and so much the better, for I shall be in command of this fort, and will have to go right by Elm Haven Mansion every day to inspect the fort, and so can see the fair Lady Lucille the oftener."

"By the way, Conrad, go up to the mansion with me this evening?"

"Thank you, Captain Pearley, but I must decline, for I do not know just when I shall leave home, and I am anxious to be with my mother all I can."

"Will you dine with me at my quarters before you go?"

"If possible, with pleasure, sir."

"When do you expect the Sea Foe into the Haven?"

"She is undergoing repairs now, sir, and I am not sure when she will come."

"Then your words tell me that you do not know what is in store for you."

"In what respect, sir?"

"Well, I got it last night at Elm Haven Mansion, yet it was not told me as a secret, so I shall let you into it, as it concerns you."

"Concerns me, sir?"

"Yes, for Sir George says that the old admiral is your friend, and, as Burnett is laid up with a broken arm which will keep him down for weeks yet, and Girard is to be ordered to a ship of the line, he, old Chauncey, is to make you commander of the Sea Foe."

"Make me commander of the Sea Foe?" asked Cecil Conrad with a surprise that told the hussar it was not feigned.

"Yes, he will advance you two steps to a senior lieutenant, and place you in command of the Sea Foe, for all say you are a perfect sailor and know how to rule men."

"Then you are so well acquainted with the coast you will be simply a treasure to the king in these waters."

"Such is what the Lady Lucille told me last night, Conrad."

Cecil Conrad's face paled as it never had in danger of death, and he seemed deeply moved.

Then suddenly he held forth his hand and said earnestly:

"I thank you, Captain Pearley, and I will always remember you, no matter what occurs in life, with friendship."

"I must go now, so farewell," and with a

warm grip of the hand of the young Englishman he turned away and walked rapidly homeward.

"The fellow's good luck is too much for him I fear, for he was all broken up by what I told him."

"But he is a noble man, and the king is lucky in getting the services of such an American, while the rebels have lost more than they can easily replace."

"Hey ho! this is a queer struggle, and it will be a hard one; but I cannot help but think the rebels have right on their side."

"Still I will give them hot shot all the same to the best of my ability, for I am an Englishman, and they are my king's foes—oh! we are going to have a storm, but I trust not such a one as we had two months ago when poor Moore lost his life."

"What a pity, by the way, he could not have lived a little longer to have died on the field of battle."

"It is the irony of fate for a soldier to be drowned on the eve of a war; but I must hasten, for there is lots to be done to prepare, or the daring rebels will dash in here some night and capture our whole command."

So saying the genial and gallant hussar captain, went on his way to inspect the ridge which Cecil Conrad had said was a good place for a seaport, and commanded the harbor of Elm Haven.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A CALL FOR HELP.

In a very thoughtful mood Cecil Conrad went on to his home.

As he neared the house his mother came out upon the piazza and greeted him with:

"My son, a package was left for you at the village to-day, and Congo, who walked over, brought it back."

"It was brought by the stage from Boston, Captain Clyde said."

"My letter from the admiral, mother?"

"No, it is not a letter, but a package."

"Strange—I expected nothing of the kind," and entering the large and pleasant library of the old stone mansion, Cecil found upon the table there a long, narrow bundle.

Opening it, to his amazement, wrapped in buckskin, he found a handsome sword, gold-mounted, and with belt, in the embroidered holster of which was a double-barrel gold-mounted pistol of that early day.

To the sword-hilt was attached a card, upon which was written:

"A SWORD TO BE DRAWN

IN A PATRIOT CAUSE.

PRESENTED TO

CECIL CONRAD

By one who wishes him every success in life."

"Well, mother, what on earth does this mean?" and the young sailor handed her the card to read, for she stood by gazing with admiration upon the exquisite present.

"I should think, my son, that it is one who wishes you well, as an American patriot, who has sent you this beautiful gift."

"Yes, that is it; but who?"

"That I cannot know any more than you do yourself."

"Perhaps—"

"Who, mother?"

"No, it cannot be, for she is the daughter of General Harwood."

"Ah! and naturally her sympathy is with England, though she is American born, mother."

"Yes, yet could hardly be in sympathy with Americans, for her people are all English, as are her associations."

"No, it cannot be she."

"Then who?"

"I cannot not even guess, my son."

"Can you not put on your thinking-cap?"

"No, it could not be Lady Lucille, as I at first thought, for she knows not of my resignation; and, as a king's officer, could hardly expect me to fight with the patriots."

"I have no thought of how to solve the mystery; but I shall accept the sword."

"Naturally, Cecil, as you do not know to whom to return it," responded Mrs. Conrad with a smile.

"Yes, I am perforce compelled to keep it, and more, I shall draw it in the patriot cause; but is it not beautiful?"

"Beautiful illy describes it, for it is elegant, and more, costly, for see here in the hilt is a large ruby," and the mother and son stood admiring the superb gift, and bothering their brains to solve the mystery as to the donor, until darkness came on suddenly, a vivid flash of lightning nearly blinded them, while a terrific peal of thunder followed.

"Ah! I saw a storm coming up from seaward, and had forgotten it."

"It will be a black night outside, and I remember to have seen a craft becalmed afar off—Hal hear that, mother!"

"Another peal of thunder, my son, though I saw no lightning's flash—but, Cecil, my son, what ails you?"

"That last was no peal of thunder, mother but a gun—hark! there it is again, and the brazen throat is crying for help."

"Quick, mother, send Congo to the shore, for his strong arms will help me, while I throw on a storm suit—no, I have not time, so will go as I am," and away dashed the brave sailor out of the mansion and down toward the shore.

His mother did not question, for she knew too well what he intended to do, for often before he had gone out to aid a vessel in distress when no man along the coast durst make the attempt.

So she called to Congo, who went at a run, and by the time Cecil had the surf-skiff cast off and ready, the African was there to spring in with him.

"Gun fire big, make heap loud cry for help—massa go, Congo go, save ship," cried the negro.

"Yes, and we must pull like devils, Congo—oh! mother has set a light in the window, so keep it dead over the stern and we'll go straight."

"Give way!"

The two, each with a pair of oars, fairly made the skiff leap out of the water, and then sent it along at wondrous speed.

The clouds were now as black as ink, and the thunder muttered through them, while afar off out at sea flashes of lightning broke through the rift and told where the storm was raging and that it was being hurled landward like an avalanche.

Out at sea, just off The Refuge Inlet, came the boom of the heavy gun, for the sea was calm there, the tide was coming in, and the vessel's commander felt that he could not beat out to sea against such a storm when it should strike him, especially if he was crippled.

At least that is what Cecil Conrad supposed was why he was firing guns for help, to have a pilot come off and run him into some haven.

Congo was a perfect giant in strength, and a thorough boatman, and he rowed a stroke that alone would have sent the boat along at a terrific pace.

But Cecil Conrad had never met his match for strength, and the two fairly made the surf-skiff fly.

The inlet was as calm as a millpond, and the light over the stern guided them, for all was darkness now.

The skiff was what was known upon the coast in those days as a surf-skiff, and was very common until late years, for in those times they had much use for them.

It was long, narrow, with high prow and stern, sharp at both ends and most perfectly poised.

Deep draught also, and with high gunwales, it was a perfect sea boat, and under skillful management could pass out through the heaviest surf.

As they neared the channel into the inlet, Cecil said:

"I will pull now, Congo, while you rest, and set the stern light."

"Yes, massa, it show him we come save him," and shipping his oars Congo at once with skillful step made his way aft and took from the stern locker a small lantern, which Cecil had lighted before starting.

This he fastened by a socket upon the end of a short staff, three feet in length, and then placed it in the stern of the skiff, stepping it like a mast.

Then he put the tiller in the rudder head, and leaning over slipped the latter without trouble, and with the same skill made his way forward once more, and just as the skiff was between the rocky cliffs that formed the gateway into the inlet, he grasped his oars again and said:

"Congo ready, massa, and not little bit tired."

"Then pull, and pull for life," was the reply, and rising Cecil Conrad made his way to the stern and grasped the tiller just as the boat struck the breakers.

It cut through easily, for the storm's fury had not reached them yet, and as he gained the open sea the young man glanced about for the vessel he had come to aid.

A red glare, and the deep boom of another gun followed, and the vessel was discovered a mile off-shore, and just in front of the cliff jutting out from the plateau on which stood Elm Haven Mansion.

"I saw her distinctly, Congo, and by that flash I saw the storm too."

"Pull, pull for life or death, for it is a question whether we reach the vessel before the storm or not."

The African made no response, for he could not so waste his breath; but the manner in which the sharp surf-skiff flew through the waters, showed that he meant to do or die, and realized fully the danger.

In fact the roar of the coming tempest now fell with appalling distinctness upon his ears, and he knew, as his master did, that should the storm strike them, stanch as was the surf-skiff, it would be hurled into the air like a chip.

And straight for the vessel steered the brave helmsman, not swerving an inch, for he knew that every foot lost increased the danger.

"There, I saw her distinctly, and she is a brig—yes, and she is coming inshore rapidly on the tide the tempest is driving before it."

"He should hold to a single anchor at least, until he gets wind to come with."

"Great guns! but how that hurricane roars, and I tell you, Congo, if we fail to reach the vessel we are gone, unless we can swim back in to the inlet, which is doubtful."

Still Congo made no reply, for every breath was that much strength lost then, he knew; but with untiring arms, and the same magnificent, mighty sweep he pulled on toward the brig.

CHAPTER XIX.

SEEN FROM THE CLIFF.

THE first boom of the gun, sending forth its brazen cry for help, was heard at the mansion of Elm Haven as well as at The Refuge, and startled all at the dinner table, for Captain Pearley, after his inspection of the cliff point on the ridge which Cecil Conrad had recommended for a battery of heavy guns, had stopped at the manor home on his way back, well aware that he was always a welcome guest there.

Dinner was ready, for the general dined late, and the captain was invited in to dine along with the adjutant of Sir George, Lord Nevil Norcross, who with the other staff officers had their quarters up at the fort.

Then, too, there was Judge Hazel and his wife, who had come to live at the mansion as a protection to Lady Lucille, for the general knew that much of his time he would be absent from home.

So the party of six, just finishing their dinner, sprung to their feet with the deep boom of the heavy gun.

"A ship in distress!" cried the general, whose long life upon the coast told him just what the gun meant.

"Yes, the storm is coming down upon her, and she is firing for a pilot," added Lucille, and she called to her maid to bring her wraps as quickly as possible.

"What! You are not going out in the darkness and storm, Lucille?" cried her aunt, Mrs. Hazel.

"Indeed am I, auntie. I wish to see if any of the coast men go out to the poor craft, for if not, she is doomed, I fear."

"Will you give me your arm, Captain Pearley, after you have drawn on one of father's great-coats? He has an ample supply for all."

This was also a hint to Lord Norcross, who would have preferred to remain in the library with his cigar; but all were preparing to go, and soon were in a rapid walk for the cliff, on which stood a stoutly-built lookout pavilion.

The guns, meanwhile, had continued their pleading appeals, and one glance over the black waters was enough to appall all with the terrors that the vessel was to face.

"There she lies!" cried Lady Lucille, as another gun revealed the position of the craft, and all eyes were turned upon her in pity.

"And there is the storm," the general added, as a vivid flash of lightning revealed the coming tempest.

"And no one goes to the aid of the poor vessel! The risk is too great," remarked Captain Pearley, with deepest sympathy in his tone.

"Alas, no one, for the risk is fearful; but then, there is no one to go, for the men from the village are too far away and they do not know the haven channel even at night, while it would be madness to attempt to run into Refuge Inlet."

"You speak like a sailor, Lucille; but I only wish there was comfort for those poor souls out there in your words," said Judge Hazel.

"What about our hero of heroes, Lady Lucille?" asked Captain Pearley.

"Ah! Conrad?"

"Yes."

"He is at his home, and besides—"

"Besides what, Lady Lucille?"

"Even he would not be able to go out and aid them now, for the storm is too near."

"If he were here, I believe he would, from what I have heard and seen of him," Captain Pearley responded.

"Would to Heaven he was here then! but no, it would be wrong to wish a foe even to go out in the teeth of that coming hurricane. See, father! That vessel is not at anchor, but drifting, driving inshore! It is a brig, and armed!"

"You are right, my child, and of course one of our cruisers. Would that we could do something for them."

"Can nothing be done, Sir George, to at least show them our sympathy?" asked Mrs. Hazel.

"Alas, nothing, and the king will not only lose a fine vessel, but a hundred gallant men, or more, will go down in her."

"The beacon! Let us light the beacon, at least, father!"

"Yes, yes," and the general called loudly for the servants to bring a lantern.

The "beacon" was an iron grate on the edge of the cliff a few yards from where the party stood. It was kept constantly filled with pitch and lightwood, which, when ignited, would send a bright and ruddy glare far out upon the sea.

The servants ran to obey the order, and all turned their gaze once more upon the sea.

Suddenly Captain Pearley called out:

"See! see that light dancing upon the waves!"

All eyes turned in the direction he pointed, and off from the cliff and upon the black waters, was seen a light.

"A boat! a surf-skiff, for I see her now!" cried Lucille.

"It is, by Heaven! Some brave fellow has gone out to face death in a good cause, and God have mercy upon him, too!" said the general impressively.

Then Lady Lucille ran into the pavilion and said:

"Why did I not think of it before?—here is a glass!"

Captain Pearley took it, opened it and was handing it to Lucille, when she said:

"Look yourself, and turn it upon the boat?"

Her manner was excited now, and the hussar quickly obeyed.

All waited in deepest suspense his words.

"By the God above! Cecil Conrad is in yonder boat!"

"No, no, it cannot be!" and Sir George seized the glass, yet after a quick glance through it said nothing and turned it upon the vessel.

"Yes, a brig, and armed. She is an English cruiser and Heaven help them!"

"And Heaven help the noble, daring man in yonder frail boat," cried Lucille with the impetuous manner natural to her when aroused. Her father's act had angered her, knowing as she did, his dislike of Cecil Conrad.

The eyes of all were now bent upon the little light, which marked the surf-skiff's progress, and the brig, which was driving shoreward, then the tempest rushing on to engulf.

"It is Conrad, and so I have hope for him and for the vessel."

"That man was not born to be drowned," said Captain Pearley, addressing Lucille; but her father heard the words, and responded:

"Yes, but he was in a fair way to be hanged, when he was so lucky as to get a king's commission, for I had my eye on him, and verily believe he would have been ere this in the rebel service; but the glamour of rank saved his neck."

"Father, you are unjust and ungenerous," said Lady Lucille, with a warmth which she regretted a moment after, for it brought all eyes upon her; but the hussar quickly came to her relief, with the remark:

"That is Conrad, for he is in uniform, as I distinctly saw the light glimmer upon his epaulettes."

"He is steering, and, if I mistake not, a negro wields the oars, and wields them with marvelous power, too."

"If Conrad saves the cruiser, in the face of this danger, I will resign my commission if the king does not make him a captain, and knight him also."

"Whatever be his reward, he will save the cruiser, for he can run her into Refuge Inlet, and he alone," said Lady Lucille, in a voice that reached only the hussar's and Lord Norcross's ears.

And as she spoke, up flared in a flash of flame the beacon-light, throwing a brilliant glare over the waters.

CHAPTER XX.

SAFE IN PORT.

THE red glare of the beacon, as it burned well, threw a light upon the sea which not only brought the surf-skiff into full view, but also the armed vessel steadily drifting landward.

Beyond the vessel the light of the beacon but seemed to make the blackness far more intense, if that were possible, and to cause the roaring of the rushing winds and waters more appalling.

With the cruiser in the radius of light from the beacon, the hussar turned his glass upon her, and, considerable of a sailor himself, he said:

"The craft looks as though she had been in a bad blow, for her topmasts are housed, or have been carried away, and her starboard bulwark is stove."

"Yes, and as her bows veer round I can see why she had dropped no anchors."

"And why?" asked several voices together.

"She has lost them, for her cables are gone—See! do you note how her decks are crowded, and all are gazing at the surf-skiff, knowing that there their only hope lies."

"And how that negro pulls," said Lord Nevil Norcross, who was an amateur oarsman himself.

"Yes, he makes the skiff fly, and Conrad steers as straight as an arrow in its flight. I shall hail him to show we are watching his dangerous course."

Raising his hands to his lips the hussar shouted, in a loud, clear voice:

"Ho, Conrad! Bravo, my gallant fellow! Bravo!"

They all saw the face of the helmsman turn toward them, and then his cap was raised in salute, and with this recognition to his pluck, he held on as surely and as silently as before.

But in the calmness resting on the land and sea just there, for no ripple of wind yet came, the words of the hussar captain had been heard on the decks of the cruiser, and such a wild,

thrilling cheer as went up from the men standing on the verge of doom, never rose from a deck before.

It appalled, it thrilled through the watchers on the cliff, until Mrs. Hazel, too unnerved, to witness more, was led to the pavilion by her husband, where she dropped upon her knees in silent prayer.

Even Sir George was moved out of his ill-will for the man upon whom again he saw so many lives depended, and he shouted in stentorian tones:

"On, Conrad, on! my brave man, and you'll win against death! On! on!"

And, at his words, from those on the cliff arose a cheer, in which the crowds of excited servants joined, and this brought from the brig some order, which caused the men to rush to quarters, when—boom! boom! boom! flashed the guns, thundering forth a salute to the daring rescuer, until an admiral's salute was counted by the watchers upon the cliff!

"As splendid a compliment as the act of Conrad is brave, that salute from a cruiser to her rescuer," cried Lord Norcross, whose usually lazy manner had deserted him from intense excitement.

Unheeding the salute, unheeding the cheers of the crew, the cheers of those on the cliff, those two men in the surf-skiff held on unwaveringly.

The great muscular arms of the negro moved like machinery, and with the same power, it seemed, and the helmsman aimed his prow straight at the brig's side.

He knew, and the negro knew, that if they reached the vessel it would not be a minute before the storm, and as the crew glanced seaward and now saw that great wall of foam, they knew it too.

On the cliff those watchers felt that it was a desperate race, with the odds in favor of death.

Should the negro tire—should an oar be unshipped from a rowlock—the fate of the brig and those in the skiff would be sealed.

Suddenly came in a voice, so loud, so clear, and firm that all heard it:

"Ho, the brig, aboy!"

"Aboy, the life-skiff!" came more faintly back.

"Get out your starboard sweeps and bring her head to the gale!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" and in an instant of time half a dozen heavy sweeps shot out from the starboard broadside, and the head of the brig moved around to meet the gale.

As it did so the sweeps were drawn inboard, and as the surf-skiff shot alongside a wild yell burst from every lip on the brig, and was echoed from those on the cliff, as they saw Cecil Conrad dragged up the side by willing hands, and Congo also, and the two ran rapidly aft to the wheel.

Then, like the burst of a sea volcano, the tempest struck the brig, and all was darkness and chaos about her as they saw her taken, it seemed bodily into the air, by the wall of waters.

A moment more, and the fire was torn from the iron grate in the beacon, and the watchers had to crouch in the pavilion for safety, while, strong as it was, and riveted to the cliff, it shook and quivered in the fury of the tempest.

It was some minutes before any one could move or speak, and then Lady Lucille called out:

"The brig! where is the brig?"

"The salt spray is blinding, Lady Lucille, and I cannot see," said the hussar captain.

"Quick! come with me, for there must be a light on this side of the inlet!" and seizing the large lantern which the servants had brought to the pavilion, Lucille bounded away in the darkness, followed quickly by Paul Pearley.

"The girl is mad! What would she do?" cried Sir George, starting after her.

"I think she means to show a light on the cliff on this side of the inlet entrance, sir," Lord Norcross averred.

"It is useless, for, even that man could never run a craft in there on a night like this!"

"You remember what he did with the Sea Foe, sir, on the coast of Maine that awful night?" the nobleman responded, for he had also been along with Sir George.

Sir George made no reply, but hastened on after the dancing light ahead, which told where Lady Lucille and the hussar captain were going swiftly along the plateau.

It was an eighth of a mile in a straight line to the jutting point that formed the left arm of Refuge Inlet, and the rocks rose there to a height of forty feet or more.

To this point Lucille was making her way at a run, the hussar now carrying the large lantern and trying to keep ahead of the fleet maiden to light the way.

But Lady Lucille kept even with him, and suddenly called out:

"Hold! we are near the brink now, and will go over into the sea if we are not careful."

"Yes, here is the path, and see yonder, that bright light is in the cupola of The Refuge, for Mrs. Conrad is anxious about her son."

"If he sees that light, and this, he will have a good guide in."

"There, now see if you can discover the vessel; here is the glass, while I wave the lantern."

The hussar captain obeyed orders as promptly as though they had come from Sir George, and turned the glass out over the sea, while Lady Lucille swung the lantern again and again around her head.

With the first fury of the storm over, and which had broken itself against the rock-bound coast, that which followed was far less severe, and the waves came shoreward in huge white-crested breakers.

The wind, too, held on strongly, and blowing Lucille's hair from its fastenings caused it to float far out from her head.

To protect her from the wind the hussar captain had drawn her behind a rock, yet she still waved the lantern untiringly.

Just as Sir George and Lord Norcross dashed up the hussar called out:

"I have her! there! there!"

All eyes were strained peering out into the darkness, and then the hussar called out again: "See! there is a light, and it must be her binnacle light, for no other is visible."

"I see her, and she is driving straight for this cliff," Lord Norcross said excitedly.

"Then she is saved," was the confident response of Lady Lucille, and her calmness caused all to gaze upon her with surprise.

"God grant it, but she is not in the inlet yet," Sir George remarked.

"No, not yet, father, but she will make it now I am confident," and her confidence was catching for the others now stood gazing upon the dim light flying shoreward, saw it waver, swerve, shoot away to port, then swing to starboard and rush along directly under the cliff on which they stood.

As the vessel drove into the foaming breakers in the narrow channel, it seemed to those looking down upon her that she was sinking; but the next instant she shot forward under only storm-sails into the comparatively quiet waters of the inlet, and Lady Lucille said impressively: "He has saved her."

"Yes, and the rain is coming now, so let us hasten to the mansion," and Sir George led the way, and, over a glass of wine the health of Cecil Conrad was drunk, and the thrilling scenes of the night were talked over, while without the rain descended in torrents, and the two officers were forced to become the guests of Sir George for the night.

"We will have the officers to breakfast with us in the morning," said Sir George, and he gave orders accordingly to his butler.

But, in the morning the vessel was gone!

CHAPTER XXI.

A MYSTERY OF THE SEA.

THE rain, following the tempest, descended in torrents during the night, and the wind kept up a dismal howling about the eaves of the fine old mansion of Elm Haven.

Until a late hour Sir George Norwood and his guests sat up, discussing the fortunate escape of the vessel, and wondering what cruiser it could be.

"I know of no brig at present in these waters," Sir George had said, and Lord Nevil Norcross suggested that her weather-beaten appearance indicated that she was just returning from a long cruise, doubtless in far southern waters.

This theory was accepted as the right one, and so it was that Sir George said that his two guests, Captain Pearley and Lord Norcross, who held the rank of a major in the British army, should remain to breakfast and meet the officers of the cruiser.

Major Norcross, in fact, had been deputed to go on board the cruiser at an early hour and deliver the invitation, while Spoons, the butler, had been ordered to prepare a most sumptuous meal.

Lord Norcross had risen betimes and found the sun rising clear in the east.

The storm had blown itself out, and the wind was blowing a gentle breeze, while the air was pure and the birds made merry music in the trees.

Dressing leisurely, the young nobleman sauntered from the house and made his way over to the inlet cliff, where he could go down to the beach and would find one of the Elm Haven boatmen ready to row him aboard the cruiser.

He reached the cliff, but a glance over the inlet's waters failed to reveal any vessel.

He looked toward the upper end, and there only saw, over the point of land that formed the harborage of the Stone Hall craft, the shallop and sail-boat of Cecil Conrad.

There was no hiding-place in the inlet where the brig could be concealed, for Major Lord Norcross knew the place quite well.

He had seen the cruiser run in, that was certain.

It had stormed until near dawn; why should the cruiser have gone to sea again in a blow?

There was the boatman from the mansion, and so the major hailed him to come up to him.

"My man, where is the cruiser that ran in here last night in the storm?" he asked.

"That's what is after puzzlin' the butler an' meself, sir," was the reply of the man, whose accent was not needed to convince one that he

came from Ireland, for he carried the well known "map" of that country on his face.

"When did you come here?"

"At sun-up, yer Honor."

"There was no vessel here then?"

"Divil a one, sur."

"But a cruiser came in last night."

"That's a fact, your Honor."

"Come with me to the cliff yonder and see if there is a sail in sight."

"Yis, sur."

And the two went to the cliff, and up and down the coast, and far out at sea they searched, but not a sail was in sight.

"The butler, Spoons, sur, he comes to have a look at the cruiser, for he says, says he, yer Honor, that he wished to know by the size of the craft just how many lieutenants there was likely to be after being; but he says, says he ter me, whin he had looked for ther vessel:

"Divil a craft do I see, Dinnis."

"And thin I says, says I:

"Right you are, Spoons," says I."

What more "Dinnis" would have said, the noble did not wait to hear, for he went straight back to the mansion, leaving the Irishman still talking, for it was not often that Dennis had a chance to air his ideas before a real live lord, and he improved every minute of the time, and he afterward said to his wife:

"Biddy, he was that attintive to every wurrud I uttered, as if I was after being Sir George himself."

Going back to the mansion, Lord Norcross met Captain Pearley just coming out upon the piazza, and to him he made known his discovery.

"This is remarkable, Norcross, and what can it mean?"

"Let us see the butler."

Spoons was seen, but he had been up early and yet not a trace of the cruiser had been visible.

Sir George now appeared and heard the story, and he also was at sea regarding the mystery.

What had caused the cruiser to immediately put to sea?

And was it really a British cruiser?

Might it not have been a Frenchman, and even one of the vessels that the Colonies were sending out to fight their battles for them?

If a Frenchman, or an American, certain it was that Cecil Conrad had helped an enemy into port; but who had helped him out again?

Certainly the gantlet to run out again was little less dangerous, in the darkness and driving rain, than the coming in.

It was true the terrible downpour of rain, and the falling of the wind from a gale, had brought down the sea from its wild fury of early in the night; but yet the danger must have been great, and did a king's officer knowingly run an enemy out to sea, when she was in a trap, as the cruiser certainly was?

That was a question that must be solved, and it must be done at once.

So the general ordered breakfast, and the matter was discussed over the coffee, until it was decided that Lord Norcross, as staff-adjutant, should go up to The Refuge in the Elm Haven barge, and request Lieutenant Conrad to at once report to General Sir George Harwood at his home.

Lord Norcross took the barge in the inlet, for it had been ordered around from the haven where it was kept, and the six oarsmen sent it rapidly along upon its mission.

The young nobleman had never been to the old stone mansion, but had heard much of it and its mysteries, and he gazed with interest upon it as he approached.

Landing, he walked up to the house, and was ushered into the library by Kaloo.

Ten minutes after he returned in the barge to Elm Haven and made his report, which was to the effect that Lieutenant Conrad was not at home, and had not been since the night before; but when he returned the Widow Conrad would deliver the command of Sir George, and her son would doubtless report in person at the mansion.

CHAPTER XXII.

AN AMERICAN WHO KNEW HIS RIGHTS.

IT was noon when Sir George was told that Lieutenant Conrad was in the parlor and desired to see him.

He at once sent for him to come into the library, where Lord Norcross and several other officers of his house-staff were assembled, while Captain Pearley and Judge Hazel were also present.

The young American entered in his free and easy manner, and all were surprised to see that he was not in uniform, but dressed simply in his best sailor suit.

He bowed pleasantly, and said as he advanced toward Sir George:

"I was told, Sir George Harwood, that you desired to see me."

"I do, sir; but as you are an officer in the King's Navy, why do you come before me in that dress, sir?" sternly asked Sir George.

"Sir George Harwood, I was for two months a king's officer; but a week ago I tendered my resignation as such to Admiral Lord Chauncey, and I consider myself a private American citi-

zen after receiving from him an answer to my surrendering my commission in the Royal Navy."

"Do you mean that you, you, sir, a short while since the skipper of a coaster, have resigned a king's commission?" cried Sir George angrily, and all looked on with surprise, while a rustle of silk in an adjoining room told that there were ladies there, who could not but hear what passed in the library.

They were, in fact, Mrs. Hazel and Lady Lucille, who had been entertained there by Lord Norcross and Captain Pearley until those gentlemen were summoned into the library to hear what Cecil Conrad would have to say.

"It is just what I mean, Sir George, that I, a poor American sailor, have resigned a lieutenantancy in the King's Navy."

"By Heaven, then you have less sense than I thought."

"That I acted according to my own views, sir, is my own affair, not yours to judge upon!" was the dignified and coolly-uttered response, and it brought the hot blood into the face of Sir George, who replied quickly:

"Name them, sir, your reasons for resigning."

"I named them, sir, to my superior and chief, Admiral Lord Chester Chauncey, but I may say that he declined to accept my resignation, and has ordered me to report at once to him in Boston."

"Ah! Lord Chauncey then did not consider your reasons good ones?"

"He should have done so, sir, for I certainly was explicit in my explanation of why I left the king's service."

"Well, sir, I leave Lord Chauncey, your admiral, to deal with you on that point; but I would ask why you insult me, a general in the British Army, and commanding this division, by appearing before me without your uniform?"

"I do not intend it as an insult, sir, either to you as Sir George of Elm Haven, or as General Harwood; but when I received awhile since Admiral Chauncey's letter declining to accept my resignation, I did just what I told him I should do, considered that I had done my duty, and should no longer consider myself an officer in the British service."

"Ah! and you then consider that you are free, sir?"

"I do, sir; but I shall report to Lord Chauncey and let him more fully understand my views."

"Your views; but what of his?"

"I shall act as my sense of honor dictates, sir, not by command of others."

"You certainly carry a bold front in that affair, Lieutenant Conrad—"

"Mr. Conrad, if you please, Sir George."

"I consider you, sir, as Lieutenant Conrad, and you will find that a court-martial will take my view of the affair; but when do you intend to report to Lord Chauncey?"

"I shall sail in my shallop this afternoon, sir."

"I may find occasion to send an officer and a few men with you."

"I will be glad to give them transport, Sir George; but may I ask if our interview is at an end?"

"No, sir, it is far from it, for I wish to ask you in regard to last night?"

"I am at your service, sir, for any questions you may ask that I do not feel that it is my duty to decline to answer, for I have to report to Admiral Chauncey of an occurrence that took place last night, sir."

"Ah, and not to me?"

"No, sir, for it does not come under your jurisdiction, allow me to say with all due respect, Sir George."

That the general was losing his temper before the cool, cutting yet polite replies of the American, his officers plainly saw.

They felt in sympathy with Conrad, at least Norcross and Pearley did, for they were well aware that an officer had a right to resign, if his reasons were good for so doing, and if he deemed that his resignation should have been accepted, he might cast aside his uniform and then appeal to his superiors for a just judgment. If he had any report to make, except in a case of immediate and stern necessity, an officer should make it only to his superior in the branch of the service to which he belonged.

As a naval officer on leave, Cecil Conrad did not come under the command of Sir George, and the two officers named saw that the American was perfectly well informed as to his rights on each point brought up thus far.

Sir George had the power, yes, but the young American was in the right, and thus far he had completely out-generated the general, who had lost his temper in the conversation.

"Well, sir, whether you intend to make your report to Admiral Chauncey or not, I demand to know something from you regarding the cruiser that you piloted into these waters last night?"

"I acted as her pilot out to sea again, Sir George," was the calm response, while every eye was upon the American.

"You did, sir?"

"I did."
 "When?"
 "Last night, sir."
 "At what hour?"
 "Soon after midnight, sir."
 "Why did you do so?"
 "It was her commander's wish to again put to sea."
 "Yet she was in a crippled condition?"
 "Partially so, sir."
 "What was she?"
 "That, sir, I shall report to Admiral Chauncey only."
 "You refuse to answer me?"
 "I do, sir, in that particular question."
 "If you do not answer me, sir, I shall order you under arrest in five minutes."
 "By what authority, Sir George Harwood?" came the quiet question.
 "By my own, sir."
 "Pardon me, Sir George, if I suggest to you that, even by your own admission, I am an officer of the navy, now under orders to report to Admiral Lord Chauncey, whose command you also serve under, and as such I can be arrested only by special orders from the admiral."
 "He's got marine and military law down to a fine point, Pearley," whispered Lord Norcross, and Captain Pearley returned in the same low tone:
 "The general is overmatched, and Conrad is simply immense."
 "I shall take it upon myself to act as I deem best in this matter, Lieutenant Conrad."
 "If you wish to take the responsibility of ordering me under arrest, Sir George, when I am now on my way to report to Lord Chauncey upon orders, as my shallop lies at your inlet landing, I am ready to surrender to you, sir."
 Sir George saw that the American knew just what he was about, and that he might get himself reprimanded, if nothing more, for placing him under arrest.
 So he determined to compromise, always a sign of weakness in a side, and so said:
 "You decline to tell me anything about the cruiser you brought into the waters on my personal estate last night?"
 "The waters of Refuge Inlet, Sir George, are navigable, and hence do not belong to your private estate, permit me to correct you, if you will pardon me?"
 "Answer my question, sir," was the hot response.
 "As to the cruiser?"
 "Yes, what was she?"
 "That I decline to answer, sir; but I shall make my report to Lord Chauncey upon my arrival in Boston."
 Sir George uttered a low imprecation, and wheeling toward his adjutant, asked:
 "Norcross, what is to be done in this case?"
 "I can see nothing else, sir, than to permit Lieutenant Conrad to continue on to Boston, as he says is now his intention."
 "Well, as he has offered transportation on his chebeca boat, I wish you to accompany him, with letters to Lord Chauncey, and—"
 "What crew have you, sir?" and Sir George turned again to Cecil Conrad, who replied:
 "Two men, sir, whose services I secured in the village."
 "Then take a sergeant and six men with you, Major Norcross, from my personal body-guard."
 "Yes, Sir George," and Lord Norcross whispered:
 "Sir George is going beyond his depth again, Pearley."
 "See what Conrad has to say," was the whispered rejoinder of the hussar captain, who was growing deeply interested in all that was taking place.

CHAPTER XXIII.

WHAT SAVED THE PILOT.

THE expected reply was not long coming, as Captain Pearley had expected, for Cecil Conrad said almost sternly:
 "Sir George Harwood, when I offered transportation to an officer and men upon my chebeca boat, it was, as an accommodation to you, sir, to take them to Boston; but if you, as you just indicated, intend to send Major Norcross, a sergeant and six soldiers along with me, to put me nominally under arrest, I shall not permit them to go; but, as my guest, Lord Norcross is welcome to accompany me."
 "You take them, sir, do you?"
 "Ad, yes, sir; but as my guest Lord Norcross is welcome, and he can carry his orderly servant, of course."
 "Suppose, sir, in my authority I deem it expedient to seize upon your craft, and send an officer and men in her to Boston, what then?"
 "If you could see, Sir George, my craft from your window, you would discover that though I am not in uniform, I am under orders, and I have the 'special order flag' now flying at my mast-head, and a vessel thus protected cannot be seized even by a gentleman of your rank, Sir George Harwood."
 "Once again," muttered Lord Norcross, while the hussar captain smiled; but the two gentlemen stood behind General Harwood.

Sir George began to feel that he was no match for the American.

He did not desire to take harsh means against one who had rendered the service to him and his that Cecil Conrad had, for he knew what criticism would follow such an action upon his part. So he determined to get out of it as best he could, so said:

"It is not my desire, Lieutenant Conrad to be harsh, or severe, especially to you, sir; but you seem determined not to take me into your confidence, and as you are on your way to report to Admiral Chauncey, you shall have your way."

"But it is my wish to have Major Norcross go at once with important dispatches, and if you will kindly give him passage upon your vessel I will feel obliged!"

"Lord Norcross, as I said, sir, is very welcome on board the little Surf Angel, and I can make him, and a couple of men quite comfortable in a small way."

"May I ask how long before he will be ready to sail?"

"Within a couple of hours at furthest."

Cecil Conrad thought that two hours was a long time for a soldier to get ready in, but the thought struck him that the "important dispatches" had to be written, and a full account of his bearing toward Sir George given in them.

So he said:

"I will be ready to sail, sir, when Major Norcross comes on board, and the Surf Angel meanwhile, will run around to Elm Haven, which will give her a starting-point of several miles nearer."

"Will you not lunch with me, Lieutenant Conrad?"

"Thank you, Sir George, but I must decline, as I alone can run the Surf Angel out of the inlet into Elm Haven," and the excuse was a good one, though those who had heard it felt that had the young sailor wished to place his feet beneath the Harwood mahogany at lunch, he could, for the sake of the honor, have left the Surf Angel to start from the inlet, instead of from Elm Haven.

Having made his excuses, Cecil Conrad turned and retired, a quiet smile coming over his face as he left the mansion.

"Ho, Conrad, I'll take the run around with you, if you'll permit it," said Paul Pearley, coming after him on the lawn.

"With pleasure, Captain Pearley," was the pleasant reply, and as they walked on together, the hussar said:

"By the king's scepter, Conrad, but how you pinned Sir George to the wall."

"It was not my intention to be severe, Captain Pearley, but Sir George forced me to show that I knew my rights."

"And you do know them—marine, military, and official law from *alpha* to *omega*, and you outgeneraled the chief from the very first fire on the skirmish-line."

"But he blew the retreat with a good grace, and asked you to lunch, and how you had the pluck—and I know your phenomenal nerve—to resist the temptation to get your feet under the same table with Lady Lucille's tiny ones, Heaven only knows, for I cannot tell."

Cecil Conrad laughed and replied:

"And yet you are resisting the same temptation for a sail around with me of a few miles."

"It's different, for I was a guest there last night, and was taking my leave to go to quarters, when you were announced; but let me congratulate you upon your splendid deed of last night."

"Running the vessel into the inlet, you mean?"

"That wasn't all, for it was the going out to her that showed the greatest nerve."

"Why, you rowed as straight as an arrow into the very jaws of hell, when you knew if you beat death you would not have a minute to boast of."

"It was magnificent, Conrad, and God bless you for it, old man!"

"Thank you; but my giant Congo did the work."

"Ah yes, and giant-armed Congo would have seen that craft come ashore had not you set the pace for him to follow."

"Did you lose your boat?"

"Yes, I had not time to get it aboard the brig."

"And the negro?"

"He was exhausted for a while, but is all right to-day; but let me tell you that the craft was nearer being lost than you think."

"Not so, for we all saw the shave she made."

"No, I mean that but for the lantern waved on the cliff yonder, over the inlet, I do not believe I would have found my way in."

"Ah! that was Lady Lucille's work, every bit of it."

"Well, you can say to her from me, that she saved that crew and vessel last night, for it was so black I could only steer by the roar of the waves against the cliff, and thus tell where there was a break in the sound, indicating the inlet."

"The clouds had blackened so, and the beacon had been blown out by the tempest when it struck, while the lightning, strange to say, had ceased, and I was in desperate peril of going

wrong, when I saw a lantern going swiftly along the cliff."

"It disappeared, and reappeared, and then was waved in a circle upon the point of the cliff and in the very nick of time."

"I might have driven into the inlet, but I doubt it, and I feel that the lantern saved me."

"By the king's crown but I am glad to hear you say so, for Lady Lucille's sake."

"She grabbed a lantern in one hand, after the beacon was blown into darkness, and seizing me with the other, she dragged the light and myself off toward the cliff."

"Then she waved the lantern with a will, while I tried to keep her from being blown up into Heaven, light and all."

"When we saw the brig dash in beneath us, and almost scrape the paint from her sides, we all, for the others had arrived, retreated to the house, to avoid the rain."

"Yes; and how it did rain; but here we are at your boat, and she's a beauty too, but a trifle small for seafaring."

"Springing upon the deck of the Surf Angel the hussar took a seat aft, while the two seamen cast off and Cecil Conrad taking the helm headed the little vessel out to sea."

CHAPTER XXIV.

A DREAD OF EVIL.

THE two men whom Cecil Conrad had shipped on board the Surf Angel, as a crew for the little vessel to Boston and back, were a couple who had been in the attack on him of the Sutton brothers, at the Golden Anchor Tavern.

For this, however, Cecil did not care a rap.

He had decided to go to Boston in his own craft, and so had called for two men to ship for good pay for the run, and to bring the boat back should he not return.

He had received from the schooner Sea Fox's paymaster his two months pay, in gold, for his services as a lieutenant, and one-half he left in his mother's keeping, for the balance was ample for his needs.

He could have taken Congo with him, but in those troublous times he preferred the African should remain at The Refuge, as a protection to his mother.

So he had set sail with his two men, who, when they learned that Lord Norcross, his orderly and servant, were to go, and were told to arrange the cabin accordingly, they showed an ugly humor, which caused Cecil to at once suspect that their intentions toward him had not been at all friendly.

Out of the inlet ran the Surf Angel, dashing swiftly through the breakers under the skillful guidance of the young master, and when she was bowling along the coast toward Elm Haven, the hussar captain said:

"I say, Conrad, what I ask you is from an interest in your welfare, and not from idle curiosity; but why in the name of all the admiralty did you give up your commission under the king? you, of all men, for no man was climbing the ladder of fame faster."

"Now, in friendship I ask it only?"

"I can answer you as frankly as you ask the question, Captain Pearley, and in one sentence—I am an American!"

"By the cross, but I guessed it!"

"Your sympathies are with the Colonies?"

"Certainly."

"Yet you held a commission under the king?"

"True, sir, but no drop of blood had been shed in open battle when I accepted it; but I have resigned, so let us not talk more upon the subject."

"I respect your honorable course, Conrad. From your standpoint you could do nothing else; but I will regret that the king loses the valuable officer he had in you."

"But we are friends, whatever your course in life, for I can ever respect a brave foe, as I know you will be, as you are not the man to remain idle when what you deem your country, and not the king's, as we deem it, needs your sword in her defense."

"We will be friends, Conrad, come what may."

"Gladly, Captain Pearley, for I have appreciated your sincere kindness since the day of the cliff adventure."

"To be honest with you, my family are not of the same stock as the coasters hereabout, and my mother is an educated lady and taught me to look upward, not downward, for the motto of my home is *Ad sidera vultus*."

"Thus I was ambitious, and, as an American, I regarded myself the equal of other men in manhood."

"When I merited the commission given me by Admiral Chauncey, I accepted it, and the same with this decoration of the Diamond Anchor, which I still wear."

"While a king's officer, I served faithfully; but now that the Colonies have cast off the king's rule, I have surrendered my commission to the hands I received it from."

"And you are right, Conrad, in doing so, and here's my hand in friendship, while I shall watch your future career with deepest interest, but here we are at the wharf, and Norcross has com-

* Face to the stars.—THE AUTHOR.

pany to see him off, I notice," and Captain Pearley pointed to a group coming down the hill.

The major was there, walking with a brother staff officer, while his orderly followed, and his servant carried his luggage.

Then there were Judge Hazel, his wife and Lady Lucille; but the general was conspicuous by his absence.

Soon after the little shallop ran alongside the wharf, the party arrived, and Lady Lucille greeted Cecil Conrad pleasantly, while she said:

"We were all witnesses of your daring rescue of the cruiser last night, Lieutenant Conrad; but let me present you to my uncle and aunt, Judge and Mrs. Hazel, who are to be my guardians at Elm Haven when father takes the field to fight against your brother Americans, who have been so naughty as to enter into a rebellion against our king."

"Naughty, my child; why, we apply that term to a mischievous boy; but it is sinful, criminal, in fact, for the rebels to go against our noble king."

"From an English standpoint, yes, auntie; but not from theirs, and these Americans will think for themselves, it seems; but what a pretty craft you have, Lieutenant Conrad, and you fly her name and colors, I see?"

"Yes, she is a pretty craft, and stanch and fleet as well, so I hope not to keep Lord Norcross long housed up, Lady Lucille."

"Oh, for that matter, father has plenty of staff officers, so don't be in a hurry to get him back again," and Lucille laughed mischievously at the adjutant, who did not know surely whether there was not some earnestness beneath her manner, and he said:

"I felt that I would not be missed as long as Pearley stay behind."

"I suppose he will have so much to do that he will wish your aid as adjutant, Lady Lucille; but beware of him, I beg of you," and waving his hand in farewell, the major sprung on board the little craft, which at once swung away from the wharf.

"You will return on the Sea Fox, I suppose, Lieutenant Conrad?" called out Lady Lucille.

Firmly came the response:

"No, Lady Lucille, I will not, for I am no longer an officer of the king."

He raised his tarpaulin as he spoke, but his vessel fell off a few points to get the wind the better, and went dashing out of the haven.

The group watched her swift course for awhile, and then returned up the hill to the plateau.

"How swiftly that craft sails, Captain Pearley," said Lucille, as they reached the lawn, and she started away as though to have a better look from the cliff.

The hussar followed her with pleasure, and said:

"Yes, she sails like the wind; but then her master knows just how to sail her."

"He is a wonderful man, Lady Lucille."

"I think so, sir, and a man of mystery as well."

"Yes, but I like him; but what do you think of his resignation?"

"He has a right to do as he pleases, and while an officer of the king he served faithfully."

"He did indeed, Lady Lucille, and he has my best wishes always; though, as I believe, he will go into the rebel service."

"You think so?"

"Would such a man remain idle in time of war?"

"True; but did he tell you what that vessel was last night?"

"No, nor would I ask him, after what he said to Sir George."

"Captain Pearley, you are a noble man, and as true as steel, as men say you are; but let me ask you a question?"

"I am an open catechism, Lady Lucille, to your queries."

"Do you believe in ghosts?"

"You startle me, take my breath away, in fact," he said in a tone of feigned horror.

"Let me startle you more, then."

"Certainly."

"You have heard that the ghost of Cecil Conrad's father is often seen ashore and on the sea?"

"Oh, yes."

"Also that when seen it is followed by sure death of one near to the beholder?"

"I have heard it so said."

"Now I saw the ghost—for so I will call it—of old Captain Conrad one day, and soon after the groom who was with me was thrown from my horse and killed."

"Again I saw it out yonder on the sea, at night, for the first time it was daylight and in the forest."

"Then it was the night before Captain Moore lost his life."

"This is strange, strange indeed."

"Now I took a horseback gallop of an hour alone this morning, and again I saw that same form."

"Describe it, please."

"A man with iron-gray beard and long white hair, tall of form, and clad in a snow-white sailor suit, even to a tarpaulin of snowy duck."

"This is indeed remarkable, and I am at a loss to account for it; indeed I am."

"As I am; and more, I dread evil to follow, as it has upon both former occasions when I have seen the man, apparition, or whatever you may call it."

"Heaven grant not!" was the earnest response of the hussar, who was really impressed at what he had heard, and the eyes of the two followed on after the flying boat, as though it was in the thoughts of each that there the blow of evil might fall.*

CHAPTER XXV.

TWO GLASSES OF NECTAR.

BEFORE the Surf Angel was four leagues from Elm Haven twilight fell, and the night promised to be fair and the sea smooth, though the wind held steadily at an eight-knot breeze, which sent the little vessel bounding merrily along.

The two men of the crew were forward, and as Lord Norcross's servant was an excellent cook, he was sent into the small caboose to get supper, while the stately orderly, in all the horrors of sea-sickness, lay at his full length upon the deck forward, groaning in his agony of stomach and spirit.

Lord Nevil was a good amateur sailor, and enjoyed the sail immensely.

He was delighted with the comfort of the neat and roomy cabin, which was amply large enough for six people, and the manner in which the Surf Angel stood up to the breeze and out through the waves was a pleasure he liked to contemplate.

He liked Conrad, and saw in him no ordinary man.

As far as education went he knew that the American was his superior, for those were the days of but indifferent education even with the nobility.

"They may have found him a poor coast skipper, a fisherman; but he's a gentleman with it, yes, and has pluck enough for a whole regiment," said this practical young nobleman, who was not so spoiled but that he could see worth in persons of humbler birth than he, who could boast a lineage that went back to royalty.

"I like the fellow, and I'll stick by him too," he said as he sat upon the deck smoking and regarding the case with which the young skipper handled his craft.

At last he asked:

"Conrad, what the deuce did you give up the service for when, at your present pace, a few years would make you an admiral, if you kept it up?"

"I would prefer to be a simple American, Lord Nevil, true to my principles, than an admiral who was a traitor to my country."

"Well I'll declare! that's the way the land lies does it?"

"Well, so would I, though I make bold to say the king will soon put down this trouble in America—and now I think of it, maybe not, for there are a deuced lot of fellows just like you that we have got to fight."

"But will you go into the service?"

"I have not decided fully upon my future course, Lord Nevil, though I may say if the Colonies wish me to aid in the struggle, gladly I'll do so."

"If the chiefs know a good man when they see one, they had better take you, is all I have to say, for I have not forgotten the day you saved Lady Lucille and poor Burnett, who by the way will never get well as long as he can be the guest of Sir George."

"Nor have I forgotten that leap from the cliff, and the way you saved us all that black night off the Maine Coast; while I shudder when I recall last night."

"I owe my life to you, Conrad, that night we were among the Maine rocks, and I won't forget; so luck to you, old fellow; but Parlez Vous says supper is ready and this salt air has made me hungry as a wolf and sleepy as an owl."

"I ordered Parlez Vous to fix us a toddy before supper, so we'll drink each other's health in it."

The French servant of the English officer fetched the two toddies, with the remark:

"Oh, Monsieur le Major, zeze vas ze perfect nectar—I make zem shust right—perfectement, monsieur."

"Bring us some water, Parlez Vous, to drink after them," said Conrad, and as the Frenchman disappeared in the cabin, quick as a flash he threw his and the glass of the major overboard, while he smacked his lips and said in pure French:

"You are right, *garcon*, your drinks are all you intended they should be."

Lord Nevil was a quick-witted man, and though amazed at Conrad's act, he said quickly:

"Yes, Parlez Vous, you are a treasure, and I am almost tempted to have another of those beverages."

"Avec much of ze plaisir, Monsieur le Major, I vill make anozer."

* Remember, kind reader, I am writing of one hundred years ago, in the days of superstition among the educated classes even, and when the specter craft known as the Flying Dutchman was firmly believed to sail the seas.—THE AUTHOR.

"Not now, for I am hungry; but after awhile."

Conrad then called one of the men forward to take the helm, and he went into the cabin with his guest to supper.

It was a tempting meal, and the two ate heartily, while, sending Parlez Vous on an errand to the other sailor, Conrad said hurriedly:

"That Frenchman and my two men are in a plot against us, and the orderly may be also."

"Those drinks were drugged, I am sure."

"Lie down after supper and pretend to go to sleep, but have your arms ready, and I'll do the same."

He could say no more, as the French servant returned to the cabin.

Lord Nevil nodded, and soon saying that he was sleepy, stretched himself at length in one of the bunks, and Conrad went on deck and took the helm, telling the Frenchman to be sure and give the orderly and his men a good meal.

Parlez Vous, as Lord Nevil called his valet, took the edibles and went forward, and still keeping his position at the tiller, Conrad beckoned to Lord Nevil to come to the companion-way.

"How long have you had your French servant?"

"We took him prisoner in Canada, and I let him go free to serve me."

"A Frenchman hates an Englishman."

"Certainly."

"And your orderly?"

"Is an Irishman."

"Ever had any trouble with him?"

"Yes, for he is tricky, and I have had to punish him often."

"An Irishman hates an Englishman."

"Oh, certainly."

"Well, my men I had trouble with, and I am sure they shipped with me to take the craft, sell her and then enlist in the navy of the Colonies, or the British Navy, when the money was gone."

"I saw them talking to your men, and heard your orderly say you were carrying a large sum of money to the city with you, belonging to yourself, Sir George and your brother officers, who were lately paid off."

"It is true."

"And I heard the Frenchman say he would arrange it at supper, and I saw him put something into those drinks, so now lie down and pretend to be in the deepest slumber until I call you."

"Down I am," and the Englishman threw himself upon the bunk again, while Conrad glanced forward.

He had spoken in a tone that reached only the ears of Lord Nevil, and he saw that the seasick orderly was so far recovered as to be enjoying a hearty supper.

The others were grouped about him, and the four were talking in low, earnest tones, and plotting a deep game of deviltry that meant no less than the killing of the two officers and a fair division of the booty.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MUTINEERS.

THERE is an intuitive knowledge among the human kind, that in nine cases out of ten permits one villain to recognize another one.

So it was in the case of the worthy quartette on board the Surf Angel.

The two men who had shipped from the village were bad citizens, for they had been ne'er-do-wells from boyhood.

They had drifted about the world on ship after ship, but always turned up at their home, for their people lived there.

When broke, they would go to sea again; but they were known as hard drinkers, gamblers and idlers.

Had Cecil Conrad spent more time in the village he would have known their character; but as it was he did not regard them as bad men.

After his affair with the Suttons he had never thought of ill-will being held against him by others, and so had offered these two men the berth.

When they walked over to the inlet to go on board at the point he had promised to land for them, Cecil had seen two other forms, and recognized the two Suttons.

This made him suspicious, and he at once became thoroughly upon his guard when he saw the expression on the faces of the two men on their discovering that others were going besides himself, for when he had shipped them he had expected to go alone.

Then, without appearing to, he watched every look and action.

The orderly and valet of Lord Nevil he set down as scamps the moment he laid his eyes upon them, and he soon caught the quartette in close communion, and became the more suspicious and watchful, and fortunate it was that he did.

As Parlez Vous went forward with the edibles from the cabin table, and a fresh supply that he had also prepared, the sea-sick orderly asked quickly:

"Did they drink it, Mither Parley Vous?"

"Ze gentilhommes zey drain ze glass."

"Then they are fixed, if you put the drug in it," one of the sailors remarked.

"I put ze droog in ze drink, monsieur."

"Well, they'll soon be dead asleep, and all we have to do is to knock them in the head and throw them overboard," remarked the other sailor.

"Yis, sur, but I was after telling yez that the major has the thousand pounds in money onto him."

"Oh, we'll not throw that overboard, my friend."

"And thin he has a watch and gold s'ale on his fob, and a s'ale ring, and the other has a diamond anchor give him by the king, and worth a mint o' money, for I saw it meself, and he's a watch and fob chain also."

"Yes, and this craft is worth a cool thousand, and is stanch enough to run us to York, where we can join the Colonies, for I am, and so is my mate, Americans."

"And I am a Irishman, and hince a natural born ribil, so will j'ine thim, and maybe I'll git to be a great general."

"And maybe you won't; but you like the English, don't you, Parley Vous?"

The sailor's question had about the same effect as shaking a red rag at a bull, for the Frenchman sprang to his feet with an oath, upsetting the dishes as he did so.

"Curse you for a fool! would you spoil all?" asked one of the sailors, dragging him down again as the deep voice of Cecil Conrad asked sleepily:

"What is the matter forward there?"

"The Parley Vous spilt the coffee onto him, sir," answered the sailor, and soon after he said:

"Now, Parley Vous, you go into the cabin and be fixing up, and your man will be asleep, so you can knife him, while you, Irish, go aft, and when you see the Yankee begin to nod, just deal him a blow that will stun him and then knife him."

"And what does yez two be after doing?"

"We'll keep the craft from capsizing, you see."

"All right, devil I care so the worruk is done and the money and jewels is got."

"Is you ready, Frinchy?"

"I was ready, monsieur," and after a glance at his long, murderous knife-blade, the Frenchman went aft with his tray of dishes, and disappeared in the cabin.

"See how she yaws, Jack, so he's a-feeling the drag," said one of the men.

"Yes, and when they do the work?" asked the other.

"Why, we'll whip out our pistols and do them, for I wish no long division in mine."

"Correct; but there must be no mistake."

"None."

The Frenchman, meanwhile, had disappeared in the cabin, where a bright light was burning.

There lay Lord Nevil upon the bunk, and he had really gone fast asleep.

Leaning forward, with one hand on the tiller, Cecil Conrad was swaying to and fro as though half asleep, and yet his eyes were upon the Frenchman, who suddenly whipped out his long knife and crept toward the sleeper, for he believed the helmsman too far gone to notice him, and if he did, the other three mutineers must take care of him.

But quick as was the movement of the Frenchman, the act of Cecil Conrad was quicker, for he leveled a pistol and fired it on the instant.

The Frenchman fell dead across the body of the nobleman, who sprang to his feet, and taking in the situation, dashed for the deck, his sword in one hand, a pistol in the other.

Startled by the unexpected shot, the Irishman had supposed it to be at him, and uttering a howl of terror, had sought shelter forward of the mast, while, with curses, the real ringleaders had jumped to their feet, feeling that it was now to be a death-struggle, and they well knew what Cecil Conrad was.

"I killed the Frenchman, Norcross, but the other three are to be looked to, so let us press them, for the Surf Angel will take care of herself," and so saying, Conrad started forward along the starboard side, while Lord Norcross took the port, his sword and pistol ready.

One of the seamen had a pistol only, and both had knives, while the orderly had his short sword.

But though three to one, they felt that what they did must be done at once, and with a yell they started to meet the two officers, the seaman armed with a pistol firing it at Conrad as he advanced.

It missed its mark, but not so with Conrad's shot, for the bullet went true, piercing the brain of the mutineer, just as Lord Nevil crossed the sword of the orderly, struck his weapon from his grasp and ran him through the body.

With a yell of terror, the other sailor started to spring overboard, but, changing his mind, pleaded for mercy; but the blood of the Englishman was up, and he rushed upon him with his sword, when, darting out upon the bowsprit, he stood there and called out piteously:

"Don't let him kill me, Master Cecil!"

"Do not kill him, my lord, but let him live to divulge the plot against us."

"All right, and hang for it; so much the better."

"Throw your knife into the sea, Jack Nevins, and stand by to get the shallop under way again."

"Ay, ay, sir, and thank you, Master Cecil," whined the man, and he went to work with a will, and the little vessel was soon on her course once more.

"Now take the body of that Frenchman and your other mutineer mates and put them in the hold, Nevins."

"Yes, Captain Cecil," and the man speedily obeyed.

"I owe you my life, Conrad; for, after all, I did drop to sleep."

"Yes, I thought you were feigning, so hardly fired quick enough. Well, Jack Nevins, what have you got to say for yourself?"

"I might as well tell you all, Master Cecil; but then they forced me to it."

"Who forced you, sir?"

"Bart Barrett, sir, and the orderly and Frenchman had made up a plan to get rid of the major, and so Bart made me join in, under a threat of death if I did not."

"Nevins, I believe that you were as deep in the plot as the others; but for the sake of your old mother I will let you go, after you have written your confession of the plot, and my advice to you is, as soon as we reach Boston, to get ashore and get into hiding before we report this affair to the admiral."

"Why not take him to the admiral, Conrad, and let old Chauncey order him out to the end of a rope, for he deserves it?"

"I admit it, my lord; but, bad as he is, the fellow has an old mother who loves him, and so I say let him go."

"All right, if you say so; but had I not better tie him up?"

"No, for he'll give no trouble."

"Here, Nevins, is the money I promised you and Bart Barrett, and now go forward and be ready to obey my orders when I need you."

"If you come aft until I call you, I shall kill you, and when we reach the wharf in Boston jump ashore, make the craft fast, and go."

"That is all."

"I thank you, Master Cecil, and I won't forget you, sir," and the ringleader of the fiendish plot went forward, chuckling at his escape, yet with a dread in his heart that after all the two officers might change their minds and hold him.

"Minds can be changed, so I'll not take chances."

"With this wind, we'll run into Boston before dawn. I'll just slip overboard when we get in the harbor and swim ashore."

"The risk is better than hanging, and they only pretend to spare me to get me to work the craft into port."

"Yes, I'll do it."

And in the darkness he did, diving deep so that the keen eyes of Cecil Conrad should not see him as the vessel swept by.

"Let him go, for he was afraid to trust us, so took the chances of going overboard," said Cecil Conrad, when he called to his man to haul down the jib and found he was gone.

"You should have let me drive him overboard, Conrad, when we were five leagues off shore, for that fellow may do harm yet," said Lord Nevil, as he ran forward to lower the jib, for the Surf Angel was nearing the wharf in Boston, and the day was just beginning to dawn.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE MYSTERIOUS CRAFT.

It is time now that I should solve the mystery hanging over the vessel-of-war, which Cecil Conrad so bravely went out with Congo, to pilot into the inlet.

It has been seen how bravely both the oarsman and the pilot did their work, and there was just time for them to be dragged on board and reach the wheel, before the tempest was upon them.

The surf-skiff they had to let go, and it was dashed to pieces by the waves.

Congo had pulled for life, and when he reached the deck of the vessel he was so exhausted that he dropped down in the companionway unable to move.

But Cecil Conrad had grasped the wheel, and his voice was heard issuing his orders in a way that told the crew that he knew just what he was about.

The brig met the tempest well, showing that she was a stanch and able craft, for many a vessel would have gone down then and there under the terrific shock.

A few shrieks of despair rung out as many were dragged away to death by the ruthless winds and waves; but the vessel met the charge, and though for a moment all felt despair, she rose well to face what else there was to come.

"Can you save her, sir?" shouted a voice in Cecil Conrad's ear.

"Yes."

"Here are men to aid you at the wheel."

"I do not need them, at least not now," and the pilot allowed the brig to veer around, while a fore-sailsail was set, with the mizzensail reefed to its smallest size.

With this canvas the brig drove on like mad, and then the daring pilot began to take his bearings as best he could.

He had seen the beacon on the cliff blown away, but he held the locality in his mind.

As the brig, after meeting the storm with her head on, was allowed to fall away before the gale, it was a moment of awful suspense.

But the slight canvas got upon her soon fetched her under control, and as her topmasts were housed and she was stripped for the hurricane, she was the more easily managed.

"There is nothing but blackness to steer by."

"Heaven knows how you can manage to go!" shouted the man at Conrad's side.

Conrad made no reply, for he could not yet see the cliff.

He was plunging ahead by guess-work, and if he found he was wrong, from the roar of the breakers, he meant to try and beat off-shore.

But against this the next words of the cruiser's commander warned him, for he shouted:

"My vessel is leaking, sir, for we were badly handled in a storm a few days ago, so it is well to reach an anchorage as soon as possible."

"Ay, ay, sir!" but though he spoke cheerily, Conrad felt that his only hope was to reach the inlet.

Then he bent his ear for the sound of the breakers, for he could see nothing.

Then, as he dreaded that he was rushing the ship to doom, and was about to stand off at all hazards, his eyes caught sight of a light off the starboard bow, and high above the decks.

"It is some one on the cliff, and they are running."

"Hal! they have stopped, and wave the lantern."

"Great God! it is Lady Lucille, and she stands on the right arm of the inlet, so she saves the ship."

Such were the thoughts of the pilot, for he did not utter the words.

He saw as the large lantern was whirled around and around, the form of a woman.

A man was with her, but she did the work that was saving the vessel.

Once he had seen her position and he knew just how to steer.

Congo came creeping to his side and grasped the wheel with him unasked, while he said:

"Massa see like owl—Congo no see only black until light come up yonder."

"Maybe it de Lord."

"It is an angel, Congo," was the reply, and the young sailor meant it, the black believed it.

And on into the pass drove the vessel, flashing under the cliff like a meteor, and as she rounded the rocks into smooth water, she glided on up the inlet toward an anchorage.

"Get your anchor ready, captain, for there is a good harbor here."

"I have no anchor, sir, for we lost them both three days ago."

"That was why we drifted shoreward in the calm and I called for help."

"Then take in sail and let her drift in with your sweeps out."

"I can land alongside yonder rock, after we have turned this next point and get into smooth water."

"Rock? Point? You have eyes that can see where others cannot, for all is darkness to me, a dim outline."

"All right, sir, get your canvas in and your sweeps out, and I'll land you in safety."

The orders were given and obeyed, and ten minutes after the brig lay alongside a shelf of rock that served as a wharf for her, as cables were taken ashore.

"Now come into the cabin with me, sir, for I wish to see the face of a man who has done what you have—hal! there comes the rain, and it comes with a rush."

The sailor followed the captain into the cabin, while Congo went forward with the men and was cared for most kindly, for they knew that they owed their lives in part to him.

Entering the cabin Cecil Conrad was struck at once by its appearance.

It was a handsome cabin, very large, and elegantly fitted up; but it had the appearance of being rather a cabinet of curios than quarters on a vessel of war.

The commander was a man of rather foreign appearance, and his uniform, though drenched, was elegant and new to the American.

Instead of a sailor cap he wore a red Turkish fez, with a gold band and a diamond cimenter pinned upon the front.

The bearded face of the man turned full upon Cecil as he motioned him to a seat, and he gave a slight start, as he said:

"Ah! you are no coast pilot, for you wear the uniform of a lieutenant in the British Navy."

"I am such, sir, or rather was until my resignation a few days ago."

"Resign, and on the eve of war, sir?"

"You don't look like a man to do that, and your bold deeds to-night, and bolder I never saw in my life, are against such a course."

"I resigned, sir, because I am an American, and I will not serve against my country."

"Ah! I see; but how was it that you, an American, got a commission in the king's navy?"

"For doing just what I did for you to-night, saving life in a blow."

"Ah! I see; but is your vessel in these waters?"

"No, sir."

"You are here on leave, perhaps?"

"Yes, awaiting the acceptance of my resignation," and Cecil began to grow restive under the questioning.

This the man saw, so said:

"Pardon me for having been so inquisitive, but I have taken a deep interest in one who has saved my vessel and crew."

"As a gentleman I cannot offer you pay for your services; but may I ask what prompted you to come out in the face of such a danger?"

"To save your vessel and your crew alone, sir."

"Then, pardon me, you sought no reward?"

"Only that of doing my duty by my fellow-men."

"Still I would like to offer you a recompense, for you may be poor, and I am a rich man, very."

"I will accept nothing, sir; but may I ask what vessel this is, and her nationality, for she hardly seems to be British or French?"

"First answer me one more question?"

"Yes."

"Are there any English cruisers hereabouts?"

"None nearer than Boston, sir."

"And no English force?"

"Yes, there is a fort within half a mile of you, a light battery, infantry and cavalry."

The man sprang to his feet in alarm and said quickly:

"Young man, this is no place for this vessel, for she is—an American cruiser."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

DRIVEN TO SEA.

WHEN the captain of the strange craft sprang to his feet as he did, Cecil Conrad saw that he was alarmed, and when he made known the secret regarding his vessel, he could well understand the cause of his anxiety, with a fort of British soldiers near him.

A flush of pride came to him at the thought of the Colonist having a vessel-of-war, and that he should save her from destruction, and with her gallant crew on board.

So he mentally congratulated himself upon his good fortune, in striking such a fine blow for the American patriot cause.

Then his exact position flashed upon him.

He had resigned his commission it was true, as a king's officer, but yet he had received no acknowledgment of his acceptance of it.

In his haste to come to the rescue of the vessel, he had worn his full uniform as a British officer.

After a moment he said frankly:

"Captain, I wish to explain my position to you, sir, and then you will understand exactly how both of us are situated."

"As I said, and as my uniform shows, I am an English officer, though an American."

"I was born on this coast, not half a league from where we now are, and I was reared a sailor, and, being poor, have supported my mother as best I could."

"Fortune has favored me so that I have saved many lives, and it was, something over two months ago, for saving the life of General Sir George Harwood's daughter, whose home is near, and of Captain Burnett, the commandant of the fort, that I got my commission, for it was done before the eyes of Admiral Chauncey and General Harwood."

"I see."

"I was proud and ambitious, and accepted the commission, while I had a better motive in wishing to learn all I could of an officer's life at sea, and turn what knowledge I gained to good use in rescuing my country."

"When returning to port and learning that war had begun, I at once asked leave, and coming here sent in my resignation, though I now know I was to be placed in command of a British cruiser."

"Of course this would not weigh against my patriotism, and so my resignation went in, and I am waiting the result."

"When I saw your danger, or rather heard your gun appealing for help, I was at my home, and with my African comrade, rowed to your aid."

"I believed you to be an English cruiser, but as now you tell me that you are an American, I can only say that I am happy in having served my country, and desire to serve it still more by putting you out to sea again before day shall dawn."

"I thank you for your confidence, sir; but is there such danger for me here?"

"There is."

"I am badly crippled, leaking, and need a week or more for repairs."

"Then seek a harborage elsewhere, or upon the Maine Coast."

"Yet I could beat off any ordinary force, sir."

"Let me tell you, sir, that though you could not see it to-night, the pass I ran you through

is but a gateway through a ridge of rocks, and in width it is not the length of your vessel."

"All around this inlet are high hills, and its width is so little that artillery could fire down upon you from any point, and with plunging shots sink you."

"Then, if you tried to escape, you could not get out to sea, for I believe I am the only man who could run you out this inlet."

"And why can you not do so, if need be?"

"I told you, sir, that I was yet a British officer."

"And would not aid me to escape?"

"To-night, yes; but not to-morrow, for what I do I am not anxious yet to have it made public."

"I see; but are there many troops here?"

"About three times the force of your crew, I should judge, if you have about seventy men."

"Just what I have, for my crew have been cut down lately in battle."

"Then you are already serving the Colonies well, sir?"

"Well, yes."

"I hope one of these days soon to be an officer in the Colonial navy, sir."

"I need an officer, so go with me."

"Thank you, captain, but I can consider nothing until I am free from my present position."

"You are a strange man, sir, and have a higher sense of honor than most men I have met."

"I hardly consider it *strange*, sir, to be honorable; but about your position here, sir?"

"There is no hiding-place here, then?"

"You were seen to come in, yes, and by British officers upon that cliff, where the beacon-fire burned, for General Sir George Harwood was there."

"But for this I could carry you up to the head of the inlet and hide your vessel for a few days."

"Why not now?"

"Because, sir, Sir George is a most hospitable man, as are the officers at the fort, and in the morning you will be boarded, and asked to become guests, you and your officers, at the mansion and barracks."

"I see; and you think I must go to sea to-night?"

"It is your only course, sir."

"But it is such a terrible night outside."

"The rain has beaten the sea down, and there is a good breeze blowing, sir."

"And you?"

"Will send my man after another skiff I have, and once outside, I can return home before dawn."

"What excuse will you give about piloting a—An American cruiser in and out again, as a British officer?"

"I shall make my excuses to no one but the admiral, sir, and shall tell him the truth."

"I see no way, then, of getting out of a bad scrape but by going to sea again."

"It is your only course."

"If you were English, of course you would find friends here; but as an American cruiser, you will be taken."

"Very well, the storm has blown out, and I'll have to put to sea, so send your man for your boat, sir, while we have supper."

Congo was dispatched after a surf-skiff, and in an hour had returned, while Conrad had in the mean time enjoyed an excellent supper, washed down by the best of wines, with the commander of the cruiser.

When Congo brought the boat alongside, his master said to him:

"I will not need you, Congo, so go home and get some rest, and say to my mother I shall be back before dawn if possible; but if not, I will land down the coast and come home afoot."

"One minute, my man, for I am sure you have no such scruples as your master, so take this as a reminder of your good work this night," and the captain gave Congo a purse heavy with gold, and the poor fellow set off for home on foot, more than pleased at his good fortune, for every member of the crew had remembered him generously.

"Now, captain, out with every light, get your sweeps out to move down the inlet, and then have your men set sail when I need it," and with this command Cecil Conrad went to the helm, and soon after the cruiser was moving slowly seaward, once more to battle with the winds and waves.

CHAPTER XXIX.

FALSE COLORS.

THOUGH the gale had blown itself out, there was yet a stiff wind, and it came directly in from the sea.

The night was terribly dark, and the rain came down in torrents; but the man who was to rescue the vessel a second time from peril, went forward, and seated upon the bowsprit, peered ahead into the darkness.

He had stationed a line of men back to the two men at the wheel, and had ordered out only three sweeps to a side, wishing to go slowly until he came into the narrow channel.

There the wind would strike him, though dead ahead, and with the cliffs on either side, he could see his way out into an offing.

The men at the sweeps pulled a long, steady stroke, and the brig moved along noiselessly.

"She's a beauty to handle," muttered Cecil to himself, as he sat upon the bowsprit, and he added:

"She looks to be fleet as the wind, so I am proud of her as an American."

"But the captain seems to have captured a number of prizes already, from the appearance of his state-room, and his men certainly look like hard fighters."

"In truth, from the glimpse I have had of a few at close quarters, they are a desperate-looking lot, compared with the trim Britishers."

At last the rocks rose dim and threatening ahead, and Conrad could trace the blue sky in the opening between them.

"In sweeps!" he ordered, and then followed:

"Set sail, and lively, lads, but without noise."

The order was obeyed, and going back to the wheel, Cecil Conrad at once let the brig fall off until she got good headway, and then began by short, sharp tacks to run out.

As they went close under the overhanging rocks, first on one side and then the other, the crew shuddered, and their admiration increased for the gallant man who had dared so much to save them.

At length the cliff was left astern, and the brig bore away on the starboard tack along the coast, keeping off-shore not over half a league.

At a point not far away Conrad intended to yield the wheel to the quartermaster, and leave the brig, for she was in the open sea, and out of danger then.

The rain still fell, but was growing lighter each moment, while its falling in torrents had beaten down the sea.

Here and there a star glimmered above the horizon, showing that the clouds were drifting away, and there was a faint light in the East which was the precursor of dawn. The captain had gone into his cabin, saying he would return before very long, and as the brig was now in no need of a pilot, Cecil called the quartermasters to the wheel, for the lieutenant, who was then officer of the deck was forward.

After waiting some time for the captain's return, Conrad grew impatient, and was about to enter the cabin to tell him he must at once leave the brig, if he wished to reach the shore before dawn, when the companionway door opened and a muffled form appeared.

"It is a woman," muttered Conrad in amazement, at beholding her there.

He raised his hat politely, when she put her finger to her lips and motioned to him to come toward her.

He obeyed at once, and she said in a whisper:

"Do not speak, but leave this vessel at once."

"Why should I?"

"You must go, so slip over the stern into your skiff towing there, and cut her loose."

"Then pull for your life, and—"

"But why should—"

"Silence, and hear me!"

"I heard all that he told you, and it is false."

"He is not an American patriot, this is not a Colonist's cruiser."

"In Heaven's name what is it then?"

"A pirate."

"What?"

"I mean it."

"It cannot be."

"It is."

"And you?"

"Are his wife."

"Poor woman."

"Do not pity me, but go."

"Who is he?"

"Balfour the Buccaneer, and this is the brig Bluewing."

"I know her now, and—"

"But go, for he has determined to force you into becoming an officer under him, as he has but one lieutenant."

"Go, or he will make you an outlaw, or kill you."

"Do you hesitate now?"

"No, but you?"

"I am his wife, as I said, and I married him knowing what he was, so deserve no pity."

"Go, or he will come and kill me, if he knows I have warned you, and so far no one is aware that I am here."

"Will you go now?"

"Yes."

"Good-by."

She held forth her hand, he grasped it, and she quickly turned away and closed the companionway door quickly behind her.

Instantly Cecil Conrad walked to the wheel, and said:

"One man is enough here, my lads, so you go forward."

The man addressed saluted and obeyed, and then Conrad continued to the other:

"Keep her as she is, my man, and don't let her swerve the shadow of a point here."

"Ay, ay, sir," and the wheelman bent his gaze ahead with fixed earnestness.

Slipping quietly over the taffrail, Conrad grasped the stout painter of his towing boat, and drew the skiff close in under the stern of the brig.

Then he slipped down to the stern port, and thence into the skiff, when he at once, with a quick movement of his knife, severed the painter and the light boat was left dancing in the wake of the brig.

The skiff had considerable water in her, but this Conrad set to work to bail out with his hat, and he had nearly finished his task when he saw lights flashing on the brig, and heard loud voices.

The Bluewing was nearly half a mile away now, and confident that he could not be seen in the darkness, he took to his oars and rowed shoreward with a strong, hard pull.

He did not dare attempt to reach the inlet before dawn, nor to pull to the village, the little harbor of which was half a league away, so he rowed rapidly toward a point of land where he knew there were several small inlets, where he could find a hiding-place for his skiff until he could come at night for it, or send Congo, who had fished with him along the coast and knew it well.

The sun rose just as he reached the point, and he saw the brig three leagues away down the coast.

"It is as far to the inlet from here, so they cannot see her from there, and it will be a mystery to them all as to what has become of her."

"Now to go home on foot by way of the hills, and it will be noon before I reach there."

So saying, having drawn his skiff out among the rocks, he started for home, and arrived about noon, to the great joy of his mother, who was beginning to feel most anxious about him.

He at once told her of his adventure, and then she handed to him an officially sealed letter that had been brought by Congo from the village for him.

"It is a letter from Admiral Chauncey, mother, and he not only refuses to accept my resignation, but orders me to report at once to him in Boston, or be placed under the ban of outlawry."

"You will refuse to go, my son?"

"No, mother, I shall go at once, and by sea, in my shallop, for the stage does not return for two days."

"I neglected to tell you, my son, that Major Norcross was here to see you this morning."

"Lord Norcross to see me, mother?" asked Cecil in surprise.

"Yes, and he came from General Harwood, and left an order for you to report at once upon your return at Elm Haven."

"I will stop there then on my way out to sea, landing on the inlet shore."

"Now, mother, will you call Kaloo and help me get ready for my cruise, and I will have Congo see that the Surf Angel is in trim, while I go to the village and find her a crew."

"Be careful whom you ship, Cecil, for since you donned the king's uniform you have made many enemies, I have heard, so be warned."

"And from whom did you hear this, mother?"

"Well, that pretty girl, Kate Clyde, rode over here to see me and ask me to warn you, but not from her."

"I thank her, and I will be careful, mother."

An hour after the Surf Angels' wings were spread, the two men, Nevins and Burnett, picked up, and Cecil Conrad had started upon the run to Boston, and which, as the reader has seen, proved to be a most eventful voyage, and proved that Kate Clyde's warning was not without reason.

CHAPTER XXX. THE REFUSAL.

ADMIRAL CHAUNCEY was a man who believed in discipline.

He loved life, was fond of society, enjoyed a social or a state dinner, was genial toward his officers, especially those of even rank, but was stern almost to cruelty in the discharge of his official duties.

He had been given unlimited power, in his duties, and he felt that he must act just as the king would do, when an occasion arose for him to decide.

His admiration for the young American, whom he had seen so bravely rescue Lady Lucille and Captain Burnett from death, was very great, and he had been anxious to push him ahead in promotions, while he had gladly decorated him with the Diamond Anchor for his services in saving the Sea Foe and all on board from destruction.

The king had advised the selection of some American, loyal to him, to be advanced, and Admiral Chauncey had decided that Cecil Conrad was the very man.

"It will bring other young Americans over to us," he said to his advisers.

"When they see how an American can rise in the king's service, they will be only too glad to come."

As for the war with the Colonies, the admiral would not tolerate an idea that the people of America had any rights.

"They must yield to the king in all things, and if they rebel then they must be quickly whipped into peace."

So he said, and so he believed, so when a rebel was spoken of before him it raised his ire at once, and he was taking every step in his power

to crush out the "cruel rebellion," as he called it, in the very outset.

Generous hearted, the admiral yet was set in his views, and when he decided that anything must be so, that settled it that it should be, as far as his opinion was concerned.

So much about the admiral, whom Cecil Conrad had to fear in having withdrawn from the King's Navy.

The admiral had informed the councilmen that he had a *protege* that would be a wonder and an honor.

An American, he would shame Englishmen by his wondrous deeds.

He was just the man that he, the admiral, wanted, and he would push him up the grade of promotion as rapidly as he could do so.

So much did Lord Chauncey talk of his *protege* that Cecil Conrad became known as the "Admiral's Idol," and there were many who frowned when the old officer said that he would place the young American in command of the Sea Foe, making the place for him by ordering Jules Girard elsewhere and giving Captain Burnett another vessel, when he was well enough to take command again.

"Not three months in the service, and wearing the Golden Anchor, and to be made a senior lieutenant," said one of the superior officers, who at once became envious of the American.

"He deserves all he gets, Gwartney," the admiral said, hotly, and not ten minutes after the letter of resignation from Cecil Conrad was placed in his hands.

He read through, and with many an oath thrown in, and when he had finished, it jumped up and stormed so furiously that he nearly scared the marine on duty at the door into fits.

The letter was as follows:

"TO THE RIGHT HONORABLE,

"ADMIRAL LORD CHESTER CHAUNCEY,

"Com'd'g His British Majesty's Sea Forces, Boston.

"SIR:—I have the honor to tender through you to His Majesty the King of Great Britain, the commission I hold as a junior lieutenant in the Royal Navy, desiring from you an immediate acceptance of the same.

"I have the honor to be,

"Your lordship's obedient servant,

"CECIL CONRAD,

"Junior Lieutenant, His Majesty's
"Schooner-of-War, Sea Foe."

Then followed a personal letter to the admiral as follows:

"In tendering my resignation to your lordship, and asking its immediate acceptance, I act from a sense of duty which I owe as an American to my honor, my country and my people.

"Deeply grateful to your lordship for the great honors bestowed upon me as an humble individual, I accepted them, though feeling that war must come upon our fair land; but no blood had been shed in warfare, and no declaration of hostilities had gone forth, so I felt that I could accept services under the flag of my king.

"After two months' service, I find that the Colonists had made their first strike for freedom, and hence, as an American, with every association and feeling for my own people, I forward to you herewith my resignation, for no longer could I serve the king except as a traitor to my own land.

"I have much to thank your lordship for; more than I can ever repay; but I appreciate all that you have done for me, and will ever feel the deepest gratitude toward your lordship through life.

"The decoration you presented me with, I am aware, can go to others than Englishmen, hence I do not return it, as the winning of it was when I served as a king's officer; but if it is the wish of your lordship that I give it up, it shall be safely placed in your hands at the earliest moment possible after your lordship's acceptance of my resignation.

"In concluding my long letter to your lordship, permit me again to offer my sincere thank, and express my feelings of deepest gratitude.

"I have the honor to be

"Your lordship's obedient servant,

"CECIL CONRAD."

And such was the letter that made the admiral frown and swear.

"I will be the laughing stock of them all, when they hear that my Idol, as they call the boy, has gone over to the enemy."

"But I will have none of it, for I refuse to accept his resignation."

"He shall not resign, he shall be a king's officer!" and the admiral called to a young officer at work in an adjoining room in a tone that made him spring from his chair in haste.

"You called me, your lordship?"

"Darn it, yes, didn't you hear me call you?" roared the angry man.

The officer had heard him, and so stated, and asked humbly how he could serve his lordship.

"Have orders sent at once to Lieutenant Cecil Conrad at his home to report to me immediately, allowing of no delay not compulsory, and get the document off by the first mail that leaves the town."

"Quick, sir!"

Ten minutes after the orders were sealed and forwarded to Cecil Conrad, and their reception by the American is already known.

CHAPTER XXXI.

SIR GEORGE WRITES A LETTER.

ON account of the three bodies in the hold of the Surf Angel, and having no one to leave on

board, Cecil Conrad asked Lord Norcross to go up to the admiral and report the situation and have a guard sent down to take charge of the little craft.

Upon the arrival of the guard he would at once report to the admiral in person.

This happened to be an unfortunate move for the young sailor, for it got the letter of Sir George Harwood, of which Lord Nevil was the bearer, into the hands of the admiral before Conrad had an opportunity himself to make any explanation.

Lord Norcross found the admiral in an angry mood, for he had just learned of an American vessel capturing an English brig-of-war after a fair action between the two.

"Ah! you come from Sir George, Norcross, and of course can give me news of that unappreciative fellow, Cecil Conrad, whom I have done so much for?"

"He accompanied me here, Admiral Chauncey, or, rather, I accompanied him, for I came in his vessel."

"Ah! he did obey my orders then, to come?"

"Yes, sir, at once."

"Where is he?"

"I left him in charge of his craft, sir, while I came to report—"

"By Neptune, sir, he is the man to report, not you."

"Pardon me if I say that I am the bearer of dispatches to you from General Sir George Harwood," the nobleman said quietly.

Admiral Chauncey knew well the influence of the family of Norcross, and it had been thrown in his favor more than once.

Lord Nevil was a gallant soldier, a gentleman, and had the ear of the king, so he did not wish to offend him, so said:

"Pardon, Norcross, but I supposed you had merely come up to town for pleasure."

"These are no times for a soldier to enjoy himself, my lord; but here are the dispatches, with a personal letter from Sir George, and after your reading of them I have an important statement to make."

"Sit down while I glance over these papers."

Lord Nevil dropped into a chair, and rapidly the admiral ran over the reports regarding the fort, troops in the vicinity of Elm Haven, and selection of a spot for the battery to command the little harbor near the mansion.

"That young Pearley is wide awake, and he is doing just right; but now to the letter of Sir George."

This is what it said:

"MY DEAR ADMIRAL:

"I address you now unofficially, and in haste, as I am anxious that you should have my story of an affair of which Lieutenant Conrad will himself make known."

"Last night our coast was visited by another terrible storm, and hearing signal guns, we repaired to the cliff to find a brig-of-war, without anchor and seemingly crippled, coming ashore."

"The storm had not broken, but was bearing furiously down from seaward, when we spied a boat going out of Refuge Inlet toward the brig."

"In the boat was a negro oarsman, and the pilot was Lieutenant Conrad in uniform."

"They reached the brig just before the storm and half an hour after the vessel ran under the cliff, by the aid of a lantern held by Lady Lucille, and found an anchorage in the inlet."

"I ordered Major Norcross, who with Captain Pearley, were my guests for the night, to go at an early hour and request the captain of the brig and his officers to breakfast with me! but when dawn came no vessel was in the inlet, nor was one visible up or down the coast."

"The craft and mysterious brig had departed in the storm again."

"I at once sent to his home for Conrad, but he was not there; but at noon, or near after he appeared, in sailor costume, and when asked why he was so dressed he coolly informed me that he had resigned his commission."

"I asked him also about the brig, and he replied that he would make his report to you alone regarding that vessel."

"It was my intention to send him to you under arrest, but the cunning fellow had his 'special order' flag flying at his mast-head."

"So I sent Major Norcross along with his servant and an orderly, and he will give you this letter."

"It is my belief that the vessel last night coming into the inlet, and going out to sea again, was an American privateer, and if so, then Conrad is an enemy to England for saving her from capture."

"But of this you will of course be the judge."

"He has gone up to Boston in his own craft, a fleet little sailer of three tons, or so, and with his own crew, so, if his resignation is accepted, pardon me if I suggest keeping an eye upon his movements, for, if he should join the enemy, with the knowledge he has gained of the Royal Navy, it might be most harmful to us."

"In truth it would almost appear that he had entered the king's service merely to get what information he could by spying it out."

"I trust no harm may come of it."

"Lady Lucille joins me in best of wishes and the hope that we may have you with us for a few days before I leave home to take the field."

"The rest will do your lordship a world of good."

"Yours faithfully,
"HARWOOD."

The more the admiral read, the more angry he got.

Under other circumstances the cunningly worded and wrong-suggested letter of Sir George would not have made any impression with Lord Chauncey; but his anger made him see all in a false light, and he said sharply:

"Norcross, do you know the contents of this letter?"

"As to the brig, sir, which Conrad ran into the inlet in such grand style?"

"Yes."

"I know that Sir George was angry, sir, because Conrad preferred to explain the mystery of the brig to your lordship."

"Well, sir, it will take a very strong explanation to me, to cause me to change my idea of the vessel, which is the same that Sir George has suggested."

"What was your opinion of the craft, Norcross?"

"That she repaired damages at once and put to sea again from some important cause."

"And that Conrad acted as her pilot out again?"

"Of course, your lordship, for there was not another man on the coast that could have done it."

"Running her in was the grandest sight I ever witnessed, and your lordship who admires nerve so, should have witnessed it."

This little fling in favor of Cecil Conrad was cast upon the admiral, who was now wholly imbued with the spirit of the letter of Sir George, so he said angrily:

"Well, Norcross, why does that man not report to me?"

"If your lordship will now give me a few minutes to explain, I will do so," and Lord Norcross began to show that he was getting a trifle nettled.

"That is what I am waiting now for you to do, my lord of Norcross," thundered the admiral, bringing his fist down upon the table in a manner that made the officers in waiting in the adjoining room jump as though a pistol had been discharged.

CHAPTER XXXII.

LORD NEVIL'S STORY.

LORD NEVIL did not start at the violent manner of the admiral.

He was not cowed by the angry officer, who had risen from humble life by his bravery, and yet had the weakness of wishing to toady those who had inherited their titles of nobility.

Lord Chauncey had been but a very short while "a lord," and he was more proud of the title than of the one he had gained upon the seas.

Stepping close to the admiral, the young noble, whose ancestry went back to the Crusades, whose wealth was enormous, and who was a favorite with the king, asked calmly:

"Will Admiral Chauncey of the Royal Navy, state in what manner I, Lord Nevil Norcross, a major of horse in the Royal Army, have offended him?"

The words were telling, for they showed the admiral at once that he as a naval officer, was holding an army officer responsible for what Cecil Conrad had done.

Quickly he changed his manner and said in an apologetic tone:

"Pardon me, Norcross, but you have not offended, only I was so angry with this American for what he has done, I spoke over hastily."

"If he has done more than resign his commission, sir, I have yet to learn of it."

"But this brig, sir, this brig."

"That he will doubtless give full explanation of; but as he did not offer me his confidence about the brig, I certainly would not ask it."

"But when will he come?"

"As soon, sir, as you are ready to learn from me why he did not come with me."

"I am ready now, my lord."

"Then permit me to report, Admiral Chauncey, that Lieutenant Conrad shipped two men as his seamen from the village near his home, whom he had reason to suspect were angry with him because he wore a king's uniform."

"In fact upon his arriving in the village, he was attacked by a crowd, but nothing serious resulted from it, sir."

"These Americans must and shall be put down; but continue, pray."

"These two men were of that crowd, and he noticed when I came on board, that they were angry, believing that he was to go alone with them."

"I brought with me a valet, a Frenchman, who was paroled from prison, on condition of his taking service in the army, and an orderly, who is an Irishman whose life I saved once, and who asked me to take him to headquarters a year ago, and I did so."

"These two men, the Frenchman and Irishman, knew that I had a large sum of money with me, and they hastily concocted a plan to get it, and also get rid of me."

"The villains!"

"They intended to see what they could do with Conrad's men, and these two worthies therefore found their plot all right, and the four joined hands."

"The Frenchman was to drug our liquor, and then Conrad and I were to be knifed and thrown overboard after being robbed."

"In blissful ignorance of all, I was about to drink a toddy made for me by the valet, when Conrad, who had been watching the whole plot,

sent the Frenchman into the cabin, and emptied my glass and his, at the same time pretending to have drunk it."

"Then I was to lie down and feign to be asleep, and Conrad was soon to do the same at the tiller, and await developments."

"I did go to sleep, and was awakened by a shot, and the Frenchman fell dead upon me, knife in hand, he having been shot by Conrad."

"Then I sprang to my feet as the others were rushing upon us."

"I ran the orderly through, and Conrad killed one of his seamen, while the other, the one that remained, ran out upon the bowsprit, from whence I would have run him through or forced him into the sea, had not Conrad, for the sake of the man's old mother, spared his life."

"He made him aid him in working the vessel into port, and the man when forward, quietly slipped overboard in the darkness, and doubtless gained the shore by swimming, and thus risking his life to escape the gallows."

"The three bodies of the others are in the hold, and Conrad awaits upon his vessel until a guard goes thero to take charge."

The admiral was pleased to hear this story of his *protege*, and was about to say so, when his eyes fell upon the letter of Sir George, at the very line that spoke of Cecil Conrad having entered the English service as a spy.

This caused an instant revulsion of feeling, and he said sharply:

"You had a wonderful escape, my lord, and this man Conrad is a very remarkable person—a dangerous person, in fact, and there are charges against him that may cost him his life."

The admiral touched a bell, and when a sub-officer appeared, he said:

"Go on board the Sea Fox, sir, with my compliments to Commander Girard, and ask him to send an officer and a marine guard to take possession of the craft, Surf Angel, at the India wharf, and to send Lieutenant Cecil Conrad, whom he will find on board, at once to me under a guard."

"Yes, sir," and the officer was disappearing, when Lord Norcross asked, somewhat warmly:

"Admiral Chauncey, may I ask if there is a need of an arrest when Lieutenant Conrad came here to report to you, sir?"

"He may not report, sir, after coming."

"There is more in this than you suspect, my lord."

The young major bowed and said:

"My address is the Army Club, my lord, and if you do not care to send dispatches at once back to Sir George, I have leave to remain several days in the city."

"When you are ready to return, please report, Major Norcross," and the admiral bowed, and saluting, Lord Nevil left the quarters with the remark:

"They are going to get poor Conrad into a tight place, I fear; but I cannot believe he has done any wrong, and so I'll stand by him."

"As for Sir George, he has some hidden motive for his hate of the young man, for hatred it is against all that Conrad has done for him."

"I shall watch the affair with deepest interest," and so Lord Nevil bled him away to his comfortable quarters when in town, and which was always kept ready for his coming.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE ARREST.

THAT Lord Chauncey would feel hurt with him, after his kindness toward him, for resigning his commission, Cecil Conrad felt assured, but that he would show anger and an ugly disposition he did not suspect.

He also had some misgivings as to how his report of the brig would be received, which he had run into The Refuge Inlet, and out again, yet he did not anticipate trouble on that score to himself.

He paced the deck of his little vessel, after Lord Nevil's departure, glancing with interest at the movements in the harbor.

In the hold lay the forms of the dead Frenchman, orderly and Bart Barrett, who had brought such a sudden ending of their lives upon themselves.

After some delay the young sailor saw an officer approaching with a file of marines.

"They are coming to take charge of the Surf Angel; but they must expect to find the mutineers alive instead of dead, from the number of men they send," said Cecil Conrad, and he saluted the officer as he approached and then said pleasantly, as he recognized him as the lieutenant of marines on board the Sea Fox:

"Glad to see you, Lieutenant Remington, and I trust all goes well on board the schooner?"

"For us, yes, Lieutenant Conrad; but I expected to find you in uniform."

"No, I have resigned."

"I am sorry to say that I have orders from the admiral to leave a sergeant and guard on board your vessel, and to arrest you and take you to the naval headquarters."

"I can understand, Mr. Remington, why you place a guard on my schooner, for three dead men lie in the hold; but why you should arrest me I do not understand."

"Such are my orders, sir, I regret to say, for I am sure there is some mistake about it."

"Thank you, Lieutenant Remington, for your view of it at least."

"In a minute I will be with you."

Entering the cabin he was soon ready, and placing himself by the side of the marine officer he said:

"I am at your service, sir."

Lieutenant Remington had always liked the American, and so he did not do, as he might have done, place him between a couple of marines.

But instead he allowed him to walk alongside of himself, though he wore the dress of an ordinary sailor, and those who saw them wondered at the act of the British officer walking side by side with a man in seaman's garb, and half a dozen of marines following.

Arriving at the admiral's quarters Lieutenant Remington sent in word of his arrival with Cecil Conrad and was told to enter with the prisoner.

A number of officers were in the room with the admiral, when side by side the marine officer and his prisoner entered, the marines being left outside.

It was an unlucky thing that the kindness of Roger Remington had caused him to do, for the admiral shouted out:

"Where is your prisoner, sir?"

"Here, sir."

"Do you, an officer of the king, bring a prisoner into my presence side by side with him, sir, and without a guard, sir?" roared the admiral.

"I beg pardon, sir, but as an officer himself, I did what I deemed proper respect for my superior," said Lieutenant Remington distinctly and firmly.

"Proper respect, sir, for an officer who goes in that rig, sir, through the streets?"

"That man appears as a common seaman, sir."

"I knew not what circumstances caused him to so appear, sir; I but knew him as an officer."

"Very well, know better next time."

"Stand aside, sir, and await for your prisoner," and turning to the surprised, but perfectly cool young sailor, Admiral Chauncey addressed him with:

"Well, sir, now what have you to say?"

"I would respectfully ask, Admiral Lord Chauncey, why this outrage of arrest is perpetrated upon me?"

The words were uttered in a tone which all heard.

There was no bluster, simply calmness allied with just indignation.

"Are you here, sir, to question me?" shouted the admiral, now worked into a temper that was growing violent.

"I answered your question, Admiral Chauncey, with a just question of my own, as to why I am under arrest?"

"I will shortly tell you, sir, and you will discover, I feel very sure, that Americans cannot make use of an admiral in the British Navy."

"You sent in your resignation as a king's officer?"

"I did, sir."

"Why did you do so?"

"I gave you, sir, my personal reasons in a letter that accompanied my resignation."

"May I ask if you read the letter, sir?"

"Yes, and I acknowledge no personal reasons of that kind, and you are still an officer of this navy, so why are you here in my presence un-uniformed?"

"For two reasons, sir, the first being that as I had resigned, and certainly saw no reason why I should not at once have my resignation accepted, I did not consider myself longer entitled to wear the uniform of the king; but, when ordered to report to you, Admiral Chauncey, I would not have been so discourteous as not to wear it, up to acceptance of my resignation, but for the fact that in serving as a pilot to a vessel some nights ago, it was left in no condition to appear in."

"You act as a pilot in your uniform, but come before me as an ordinary seaman," sneered the admiral.

"Not from choice in either case, sir, for I had no time to change when called as a pilot, nor a suit to wear; but when my uniform was ruined, I put on this suit, just completed for me by my mother."

"Such are my reasons, sir, and I would ask, Admiral Chauncey, what are the barriers against the acceptance of my resignation from the king's service?"

"That you shall know later, sir, but now you have a report to make to me, I believe?"

"Of the unfortunate affair of our run here, sir, in which it was necessary to take life?"

"That also will come later, for I have heard Lord Nevil's statement of the affair."

"There is another report to make, sir, of a brig that you acted as pilot for."

"Ah, yes, sir, I was not aware that you had yet heard of that affair."

"Well, you see that I have heard, and from a good source."

"Lord Nevil, sir, is only acquainted with the fact that I brought the vessel into the inlet."

"I beg pardon, but Lord Nevil made no other report of the affair than that fact, except that it

was the pluckiest thing I ever saw done," and Lord Nevil stepped forward, having met an officer high in favor with the admiral, and returned with him, hoping to put in a good word for the American.

"My information does not come from Lord Nevil Norcross, sir," said the admiral, evidently nettled at what the young noble had said.

"The report that I have to make, my lord, I would be glad to make to you alone, unless you desire the presence of one of your officers, and will permit Lord Nevil, who was a witness of the affair, to be present."

It was very evident that Admiral Chauncey was growing more irrational, and for the situation he found himself in he blamed the American.

That Cecil Conrad had been called the "Admiral's Idol," had reached his lordship's ears, and he was determined not to be ridiculed; but to show them who had bantered him, that he would be even more severe with the one he had advanced so rapidly, than with one whom he had held no interest in.

It was a false reasoning, but came of the admiral's false pride.

So he said in the same stern manner in which he had before addressed the American:

"I cannot see, sir, why you should be ashamed or afraid to make your report in the presence of these gentlemen."

The hot blood rushed into the face of Cecil Conrad, and his voice rung out sternly in the words:

"You promoted me, sir, for courage, so should know that I have nothing to fear, while I have never yet been guilty of an act that I am ashamed of."

"Perhaps, my lad," said Lord Nevil, hastily, for he could see that the admiral was foaming over:

"Perhaps the good of his Majesty's service demands a secret report."

This idea caught the admiral at once, and prevented his turning upon Lord Nevil for his interference, as he looked upon it, and which bold act upon the part of the young noble all had wondered at.

"Ah! perhaps it were best to hear your report in private," but unable to check a fling at the major, he asked, with a sneer:

"But why your deep interest in this man, my lord?"

"From the common claim of gratitude, for upon two separate occasions this gentleman saved my life," was the cool response of the young dragon.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE STORY TOLD.

HAVING decided to allow Cecil Conrad to speak in private, or, that is, in the presence of himself and two officers, Admiral Chauncey requested the others in the room to withdraw, at the same time making an exception of an American who was a great "king's man," and seemed more bitter toward his own people than even the Englishmen, and the officer who had come there with Lord Nevil.

"You will pardon me, my lord, I know, when I tell you that I have a most important affair to look after in a few minutes, and, besides, would it not be as well to have Norcross, for he witnessed what it seems the prisoner has to report, and can correct you if he goes wrong in his story."

"Take Norcross, my lord, in my stead, for you know through him is the best way to the king's ear."

"Yes, yes, I will have Norcross remain."

"Tell him, please."

"You did that like a diplomat, Marcy," said Lord Nevil, as his friend told him to take his place in the admiral's room.

"Always glad to serve you, Nevil; but you nearly asked too late."

"The fellow is your friend, I see, and so keep the old admiral in check, and that cunning snake, old Wethervane, too, for he did not look at the lad as though he held high regard for him."

"But go, or old Chauncey will be sounding his fog-horn for you."

"I'm off," and Lord Nevil slipped into the admiral's room, where Cecil Conrad stood calmly waiting to be addressed, and Sharp Wethervane, the American merchant and a man of great wealth, was talking in a low, earnest tone to the admiral.

"Lieutenant Remington, you can retire until you are needed."

"Prisoner, step nearer, and you, Wethervane, and Lord Nevil be seated," said the admiral.

"Now, sir, I desire to hear any report that you have to make, and these gentlemen will be witnesses of your story."

"Wethervane will you sit there and take notes?"

"Permit me to relieve Mr. Wethervane of that arduous task, while he also writes a hand, admiral, that is simply abominable, as I know from having financial dealings with him," and Lord Nevil very coolly took the seat at the table, and drew the ink-horn and paper toward him, while he held the quill-pen ready for use.

In spite of the situation he was in, Cecil Conrad smiled at the clever manner in which Lord Nevil was working to aid him.

"Now, sir, about that brig?" said the commodore.

"I desire to report, sir, that night before last, about twilight, I saw a storm arising from seaward, and heard a gun for a pilot."

"The air was calm, and the storm coming from the sea at once told me the danger of the vessel, and I ran to my surf-skiff, at the same time calling to my mother to order Congo, an African slave, to join me."

"I lighted the lantern, got the oars ready and cast off, just as Congo arrived, and we pulled together to the channel leading from the inlet, when I took the tiller, set the light in the stern, and the African rowed on out into the ocean."

"I saw the vessel, or brig, and it was still firing minute guns."

"She lay off-shore half a league and was being driven in by the swell, for having lost her anchors in a blow, as I subsequently learned, she was helpless, as there was a dead calm."

"The storm was sweeping down rapidly, and Congo pulled with all his power, while we were sighted from the brig by a beacon that was lighted upon the Elm Haven cliff."

"We reached the brig in time to get aboard, and that was all, for I lost my skiff, and I took the wheel, and met the storm."

"We weathered the first shock, and then I headed for the inlet, and yet it was too dark to see anything, and, but for the thoughtfulness of Lady Lucille running to the cliff with a lantern, I do not believe we would have been able to run in."

"But the light saved us, and I ran the brig to a landing, and, as it began to pour rain went into the cabin with the captain."

"I at once saw that he wore a different uniform from the Royal Navy, and more, I noted that his cabin was strangely filled with articles one does not expect to find on board a fighting craft."

"He saw my uniform, and asked who I was, and my reply seemed to startle him, especially when I reported a force near of English troops."

"Then I asked his nationality, and he informed me that he was an American cruiser."

"Ha, a rebel craft?"

"He said not so, sir, but an American cruiser."

"Well, sir?"

"I then told him that although in British uniform, I had resigned, and that for his vessel to remain there would be to be taken, and, as I had brought him into the inlet, I would take him to sea again, if he would go as soon as he could make a few hasty repairs."

"You were, indeed, to play traitor to the king, sir."

"I had severed my allegiance to the king, sir; but had I not, had I been even a British officer, an Englishman I mean by birth, I would not have allowed that craft to be captured when her captain trusted his vessel in honor and confidence in my hands, and if I mistake not, Lord Nevil or you would have done the same."

"I certainly should," dryly said Lord Nevil, while the admiral remarked sternly:

"No, sir, no! I would have taken the foe to my king, find him where I might."

"Yes, yes, so would I, sir, so would I," said Sharp Wethervane, eagerly.

"As for you, sir, I am sure that you would, for you are a traitor to your country now," sternly said Cecil Conrad.

"Silence! you are not to be the judge of this gentleman's motive."

"Now go on with your story, sir."

"I got the sweeps out, sir, and had the brig pulled down to the inlet entrance, having sent for another boat to return in."

"I then set sail and ran the brig out to sea and along the coast half a league off-shore."

"The captain had gone into his cabin, and I was going to call him, as I wished to reach home before dawn."

"Doubtless, sir, doubtless."

"I was about to call the captain when the companionway opened and I saw to my surprise a woman."

"Oh, yes, these rebel women go everywhere to urge on the men to war," sneered the admiral.

"That is what makes a great nation, admiral, when the women are the incentive to men to do their duty," quietly said Lord Norcross.

"We are not discussing women, my lord."

"Pardon me, but I thought we were, for certainly I heard Mr. Conrad say that there was a woman in the case—there always is."

"In the companionway, he said, Lord Nevil."

"Ah, yes."

Conrad again smiled, and the old Tory asked with a sneer:

"What does the gentleman see so funny that it makes him laugh?"

"He was looking at you, Mr. Wethervane," Lord Nevil put in quickly, and Cecil Conrad could hardly restrain a laugh, but resumed:

"This woman whom I saw, admiral, in the companionway, motioned me not to speak and to approach."

"I did so, and she told me that the captain

was determined that I should be an officer on his vessel, and that he had told me nothing but falsehoods, for the brig was not an American cruiser."

"Rebel, you mean?"

"She said American cruiser, sir."

"Go on, will you, man?"

"She said that the craft was none other than a pirate, and—"

"A what, sir?"

"A pirate, sir, the brig Bluewing, and her captain was Balfour the Buccaneer."

The admiral sprang to his feet, nearly frightening Sharp Wethervane out of his wits.

"So, sir, you ran a pirate into port, sir, did you, and carried her out to sea again safe and sound, did you?" cried the admiral in thunder tones.

"I did, sir, but I did not know her character when I did so, nor until I had taken the vessel again out to sea."

"And had you done so, sir?"

"I would never have acted as pilot to a pirate craft, Lord Chauncey."

"You say so now?"

"Yours is the power, sir, to fling an insult into the face of a prisoner."

Lord Nevil smiled approval at the retort, while the admiral winced under the sting in the words.

But he said, as though to check other words:

"How did you leave the brig?"

"As the woman told me that she was the captain's wife, and I had heard much of the cruel Balfour, I was sure that he would do what she said was his intention, that is, keep me on board and force me to serve him, or kill me, for he had but one officer."

"She bade me at once lower myself into my boat towing astern, and escape, and this I did, unseen by the helmsman."

"I baled my boat out with my hat, and was rowing shoreward when I saw the brig put about and heard loud voices on her, doubtless caused by the discovery of my escape."

"But she soon after held on down the coast, while I landed in an inlet, tied my boat and walked to my home, where I found your order to report to you at once, sir."

"The story of our run here, you are already acquainted with, Admiral Chauncey, from the lips of Lord Nevil here."

"This is my report, sir, and I would now most respectfully ask why I am under arrest, and why my resignation is not accepted by you, sir?"

CHAPTER XXXV.

WITHOUT MERCY.

LORD CHESTER CHAUNCEY was silent, after hearing the story told by Cecil Conrad.

Lord Nevil glanced at him anxiously, for he preferred to have him storm; it was less dangerous he thought than his silence.

Mr. Sharp Wethervane sat with a mocking smile upon his face, for he seemed to have already formed an opinion against the prisoner.

Lord Nevil hoped, for the story to him was a frankly told narrative of the facts.

He did not for a moment doubt the words of his American friend.

At last the admiral, paying no attention whatever to the question asked him by Cecil Conrad, turned to Wethervane and asked:

"Well, merchant, what do you think of this story?"

"I know so much of the young man, my lord, that I have but one opinion," was the answer.

Lord Nevil looked at him in polite surprise.

Could he after all have misjudged the man?

As for Cecil he simply glanced toward him with an air of utter indifference.

"You know him then, merchant?"

"Well, I know of him, and I know something of his antecedents and family history."

"You speak as though what you know is against him."

"Most certainly, my lord."

"May I ask what you know of him?"

"Pardon, my lord admiral, but is not the question at present why Conrad is under arrest?" said Lord Nevil.

"The question is, sir, to know all I can about this man, this prisoner."

"Unknowing him, for acts of great gallantry, I made him, in the king's name, an officer in the Royal Navy, and more, I decorated him in the name of his Majesty, as I have a right to do in special cases, with the Diamond Anchor, worn by few men."

"Now, sir, I have reason to believe that this man was secretly in the service of the rebels, and entered the service of Great Britain as a spy alone, and—"

"It is false! and I fling the lie in your teeth, Admiral Chauncey, if you make the charge," rung from the lips of the young American sailor in a tone that fairly thrilled those who heard it.

The admiral turned livid, while Wethervane cried:

"Hear how he insults you, my lord!"

In a voice husky from passion, Lord Chauncey responded:

"Prisoner, I said that I had reason to believe, and I have, that the charges I spoke of are true;

but, as you are in my power, I cannot resent your words—at least not now.

"I wish to say that it has been suggested to me that you were a spy in the Royal Navy, a rebel spy, and now that you have information of value, you are anxious to resign and go into the so-called navy of the traitor Colonists.

"Now, I have heard your story, I read your letter, and you admit your sympathies with the rebels."

"I certainly do, and the American who serves a king when his country needs his aid is a traitor and a coward."

The fling was directly at Sharp Wethervane, and though he flinched, he took up the gauge thus thrown down, and retorted:

"You have not heard my story, my lord, for it may help you decide as to the truth of these reports against Master Conrad."

"My lord, with such serious charges against Mr. Conrad, may I suggest that you order him before a military court for trial, and not have him subjected to the charges of a man who certainly shows himself to be his foe, when he has no one to defend him, no proof to give, only his own word to depend upon?"

There was no mincing the matter that Lord Nevil meant all he said, and even the stormy admiral saw that the noble was in no humor to storm at, and so he said:

"Since the Colonists have met his Majesty's troops in warfare, the power I have here, my Lord Norcross, in the absence of a superior, is supreme—supreme as the king's—and I wish to know what this man can prove or disprove, for upon that I hold him for trial or dismiss the case."

"Under such circumstances, my lord, I yield my point, for I believe the prisoner can prove to your satisfaction that he is falsely accused."

"We shall see, sir. Now, Merchant Wethervane, I will hear your story."

"It is not really a story, my lord, simply a few facts about him and his father, you know."

"You see, I knew his mother, and—and—you see, I knew her quite well; at one time it was thought by many that she would become my wife; but then, you know, she married this man's father, a sea-captain."

"Ah, yes, I understand," and there was a world of meaning in the way Lord Nevil uttered the words.

They seemed to imply that the cause of Wethervane's hatred of the prisoner was apparent.

"Yes, she married Conrad, a sea-captain."

"Who he was no one knew, more than that he was a sea captain, and I remember that there were rumors that he was—was—I must say it, my lord, a rover."

"A what, Wethervane?"

"A rover."

"Pirate, you mean?"

"Yes, my lord?"

"Then say so."

"Well, people hinted as much, and he was lost at sea, when the prisoner here was a small boy."

"It was said too that he had treasures buried in his home, his wife's it was, for she inherited riches, and I went up and called on her, when I heard she was a widow, to see if I could help her any."

"I understand; but did you find the pirate treasure, Merchant Wethervane, for I have heard persons say often that you were rich as a pirate?" and Lord Nevil showed just what his thoughts were.

All the time that the merchant was talking, Lord Nevil had kept his thoughts upon Cecil, and the look had restrained him from springing upon the old Tory and strangling him.

But after the first impulse to do so had passed, he calmly listened to the rest, wholly unmoved.

"I am rich, my lord, a very rich man; but I did not get it through piracy."

"Not on the high seas, at least."

Lord Chauncey enjoyed this sparring with Wethervane, for he did not like the man, but feared him.

The truth was Lord Chauncey was a card-player, and often lost heavily at a game.

Wethervane was his stand-by to borrow from, and he owed him at times large sums, and just then was one of the times.

He knew too the merchant's influence, through his money, and that he was a good friend to have among the Americans.

A Tory too, he could help the king's cause immensely, and he was interested with the merchant in some financial transactions that might repay them both largely.

But Merchant Wethervane always wanted his "pound of flesh" in interest, and he got it, as the admiral well knew.

So when Lord Nevil made a point against the Tory, Admiral Chauncey was glad of it.

"Did the Widow Conrad refuse you again—ah, beg pardon, your face tells the story, and I should not have touched upon so delicate and painful a subject."

"I beg pardon, Merchant Wethervane, you were saying that—" and there was a wicked look in Lord Nevil's eyes.

"I was saying that the Widow Conrad refused my help, and yet she was poor, or appeared to be."

"But folks told me that she had a living, and it came, some hinted, from the treasures they said Captain Conrad had hidden away, and which no one looked for, as the skipper's ghost haunted his old home, it was said."

"I kept my eye on the boy as he grew up, and his mother raised him, they say, to be a gentleman, and though nobody knew just where the money came from, he had a fine yacht, and boats, and a horse, and rifle, and books, and—"

"In short, every luxury, Mr. Wethervane, that heart could wish."

"Yes, my Lord Nevil, yes," said the Tory.

"Is that all, Merchant Wethervane?" asked the admiral.

"Well, except, my lord, that it was rumored that the prisoner used his yacht as a smuggling craft, and was always known as a hot-headed rebel, and that is enough, surely, my lord."

"To smuggle and rebel, yes, and I am sorry to see that the coils are tightening around you, Conrad, for here is a gentleman who has known you from your youth, and your father before you, and his charges are certainly most damaging."

"My Lord Nevil, I shall hold this prisoner upon several serious charges; first, of being the son of an alleged pirate, of smuggling himself, of being an acknowledged rebel against the king, yet entering his Majesty's service as a spy, and lately taking out to sea, when she was in our power, as it were, a well-known buccaneer craft which, if he was lawless himself, looks as though he had criminal dealings with."

"Prisoner, you are to be taken on board the Sea Foe, and placed in double irons until you can be brought to trial, and let me add, if the charges against you cannot be disproven, then you most certainly stand a good chance of being swung up to the yard-arm."

Cecil Conrad bowed, his face pale, but unmoved, and Lieutenant Remington was called in with his marines and ordered to conduct the prisoner at once on board the Sea Foe, with orders to Commander Jules Girard to place him in double irons.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE FRIEND OF A FOE.

LORD NEVIL said nothing, as he saw the American led from the presence of the admiral.

He simply gave Cecil Conrad a look which was understood to mean that he had not deserted him.

Then he turned to the admiral and said:

"My lord, if not asking too much, I would be delighted if you would honor me at dinner to-day."

The admiral knew what Lord Nevil's dinners were, and no one ever was known to refuse an invitation if once he had dined with the young noble.

"It will be select, my lord, yourself, Colonel Edgar Marcy of my regiment, you know, General Latrobe and myself, and at six at the Military Club, my lord."

Lord Chauncey would be delighted to come, and said so, for he was glad to enjoy just such a dinner as Norcross always gave, and which he could not afford, or at least could not while he gambled as he did.

Merchant Sharp Wethervane would have been "delighted" also, but did not get the chance.

He was a toady after the nobility, and knew all about Lord Nevil's influence and wealth, and wished to have it said that "he had dined with my lord Norcross."

But he missed the chance to say so.

Then Lord Nevil took his leave and went straight to the club room, where he left invitations for Colonel Marcy and General Latrobe, after which he ordered a dinner for five, the best that could be served.

Then he sat down in his room and wrote the following letter:

"MY DEAR PEARLEY:—

The very deuce to pay here, for old Chauncey is red hot against poor Conrad, who is accused of being the son of a pirate, a smuggler himself, with tons of buccaneer treasure hidden away in the vaults of his old rookery of a house."

Besides it is said that he was in rebel pay and entered the king's service as a spy, while the craft he brought in that night was the brig Bluewing, buccaneer Balfour's, and he took it to sea again, and confesses that the captain played rebel cruiser on him, and he so thought until the craft was again at sea."

"All these charges are rot, of course; but poor Conrad can prove nothing, so is in double irons on board the Sea Foe, which means that he will be tripped some fine day at sea and swung up at the yard-arm."

"My orderly and old Parley Vows took a notion they would kill and rob me, and got Conrad's crew also into it, for they had formed the same pleasant game to play on the skipper; but Conrad sized their game, saved my life, and we laid out three and got away, so you may be sure I am for Conrad now and forever."

"He has an old enemy here in that shark, Wethervane, who got you into his financial grip, you remember, and he wishes the youth to hang."

"Now I have given you these points, so tell Lady Lucille of them and ask her to help us out."

"Ask her to see Mrs. Conrad, and tell her that her son is in duress vile, but friends are working for him, and to see if she knows anything about old

Wethervane, and to let me know at once. Sir George must know nothing, for he is really an enemy to Conrad."

"Get all you can, do all you can, and let me know by messenger, for I send this by special to you."

"Yours, NORCROSS."

"P. S.—I forgot to say that I give the Ad. a dinner to-night, and bring to bear upon him such big guns as my colonel, Marcy, and General Latrobe."

"They are my chums, and I'll put the case before them, then tell the tale to them before the Ad., and ask their opinion."

"Maybe their opinion may get Conrad free, and maybe it won't."

"It's worth the risk, though."

"I have ordered dinner, the very best, for four, and wine for eight, so as to help the cause along."

"Again, N."

This letter was sealed and dispatched at once by a special messenger on horseback, and then Lord Nevil took the rest he needed, for he had been up all night, and until late the night before, and it began to tell even upon his splendid physique.

When the appointed hour came for his army guests to arrive he was ready to meet them.

General Ferdinand Latrobe was a dashing officer, fond of life, and a gentleman to the man or born.

He had a great affection for Lord Nevil, as also had Colonel Edgar Marcy, who has before been mentioned, and was the major's special chum.

The two guests heard the whole story, and were won over to like Conrad, whom they had once met when he was in port on his first cruise on the Sea Foe.

Then they departed, to drop in half an hour after, when the admiral had arrived, and they were welcomed as though it was their first meeting.

The admiral was taciturn, for he had already been often asked about his "American Idol," for the story of Conrad's arrest had naturally leaked out.

But the dinner soon began to warm his stomach and the wine to raise the cockles of his heart, and he became a jolly old tar after he had beneath his belt half a dozen bottles of rare old wine.

"Admiral, there is so much talk about this American officer, Conrad, I would like to sketch his story to the general and Marcy, for their judgment is excellent, and ask them if they think a different course from the one you took in the matter would have been just."

"Certainly, certainly, my dear Norcross, and if they don't say to hang him, then I'll let him go," was the answer of the old admiral.

The story was briefly told, Lord Nevil dwelling particularly upon the good points in favor of Cecil Conrad, and when he had finished he asked:

"Now, general, what would you say as to the guilt or innocence of the accused?"

"Why, that he is an American surely, and no more."

"All other charges are ridiculous."

The admiral winced, while the colonel gave his opinion to coincide with that of his superior.

"I may be wrong, gentlemen, and I'll think it over to-night, and if I feel I have wronged the lad, I'll be content with dismissing him from the service, that is all, and we'll have him fighting us on the sea I'll warrant in six months time."

With this Lord Nevil had to be satisfied.

It was a point gained anyway, to have the admiral think it over and not act from impulse.

And the admiral did think it over, but not that night, but the next morning after he had seen Wethervane, and that worthy had a number of "proofs," he called them so, of Cecil Conrad's having been connected with smugglers.

So when Lord Nevil called at headquarters in the afternoon the admiral told him firmly:

"I have more proof against the fellow, Lord Norcross, and he must stand his trial on several charges, and if he does not hang it will be a surprise to me."

"When will he be tried, sir?"

"I do not know now; but as soon as I can see my way clear about it," was the answer, and Lord Nevil left the admiral's quarters with a sad heart, for he had come to like the American even though a foe, for he felt convinced that Conrad was a rebel at heart at least, though innocent of the serious charges against him.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE SPECTER OF THE INLET.

THE letter of Lord Nevil was received with surprise by Captain Pearley.

His orderly brought it over to Elm Haven, where he had gone upon his daily morning call to see the general, which meant in fact the general's lovely daughter.

What his chances might be of winning Lady Lucille Captain Pearley did not know, but he was not a man to readily give up.

He was the brother of a baronet, and had a fine old home in England left him by an uncle, with money enough to support it.

He had risen through bravery, was a splendid type of a soldier, and a very handsome man when in his full hussar uniform.

The ladies were all fond of him, but he wished to win the heart of one in particular and that one was Lady Lucille.

"But there are scores more like me.
 "If another wins and I lose, it will hurt me, I admit; but I won't despair.
 "Poor Moore loved her, and he is gone.
 "Burnett is a perfect fool over her, and his arm simply gets worse, as long as Sir George will insist upon his remaining his guest.
 "But the Sea Fox will be in soon and I guess he'll go back in her, now that Conrad is out of the way, for his resignation lets him out.
 "Then there is Jules Girard.
 "Well, he's a deuced clever fellow, but I don't think he stands any chance with the fair Lucille.
 "General Latrobe wants her, as does Colonel Marcy, and I am not so sure but that the old Thunderer, as his men call the admiral, is trying in a sly way to capture the prize.
 "He's awful sweet on her, and he and Sir George are cronies; but I don't think she would wish to bind herself to an old ship of state like that.
 "The man I think I have most cause to fear is Norcross.
 "Now, I'd rather see him win her next to me, for he's a royal good fellow, no nonsense about him, and girls just go wild over his good looks, while he could buy us all, and his title of nobility goes away back a thousand years, and old names count.
 "Then he's dead in love with her, and she likes him, I am sure.
 "But she likes me, too; and maybe that's all.
 "Let me see if I can think of any one else who can be marked *dangerous*.
 "She is a flirt of course, for all pretty women are, and it's their prerogative, for how else can they win a fellow but by pretty ways and eyes.
 "Now I think of it the handsomest specimen of manhood I have seen in many a day is the American, Cecil Conrad.
 "Sprung from nowhere, I admit, but he's got the form and eye to catch a woman, yes and the voice too, while he has more pluck than a Hindoo.
 "But then Sir George looks daggers when the lieutenant glances at his daughter, and he hates him to boot for some reason.
 "But the fair Lucille likes him a little, and if—if he were *only my Lord Conrad*, or commodore, why then—but here I am," and the officer ascended the piazza at Elm Haven Mansion, for he had been walking down from the fort during his soliloquy upon Lady Lucille and her lovers.
 "Soon after it was that the orderly brought him the letter with the remark:
 "Sent by special messenger, sir, and he will wait to take back an answer."
 "Lucille was seated upon the piazza with the captain, while her father was busy in his library with several of his staff.
 "Judge Hazel had gone out with his rifle, and his wife was in her room sewing.
 "The captain read the letter over twice, and then said:
 "Orderly, I will be up at my quarters before very long, so tell the courier to wait."
 "Then he glanced at Lady Lucille and said:
 "I have a letter here which I wish to consult you upon.
 "How would you like to take a row up the inlet with me?
 "With pleasure, but why the inlet?
 "I have a reason for it I cannot now explain."
 "Lucille arose, and, entering the house, soon returned with her sun-bat on, and the two walked down to the inlet shore, where a boat belonging to Elm Haven was always kept.
 "When the captain had rowed leisurely along for some distance, he said:
 "Lady Lucille, this letter is from Norcross, and though it was not meant for you to see, I can intrust it to you and betray no confidence, for it is best to know all, and then we can see our way clear to act, for our friend Conrad is in trouble."
 "He watched her face as he spoke, and saw her start and change color; but she asked, with perfect calmness:
 "Nothing very serious, I hope?
 "The letter will explain all."
 "She read it from beginning to end, and then handed it back to him with the firmly-uttered words:
 "Captain Pearley, this is a plot to sacrifice that brave man; but we must not permit it."
 "It is the view I take, Lady Lucille, and I am Conrad's friend, and Norcross is a power by himself.
 "Conrad has acted with honor, I am sure; but he has resigned, and that angers the admiral, and he has foes who will press him to the wall.
 "But let me row you on up to The Refuge, if you are willing to see his mother."
 "Most willing, for it will be well to prepare her, and she can suggest some plan, and especially about this man Wethervane.
 "But you must go with me, and you can suggest, and we'll talk it all over together—Oh, see there!"
 "They were up in the narrow part of the inlet now, nearly to the head of it, for beyond, around a cedar-clad point, was the harborage before the door of the old stone mansion.

And standing in the rimber on the shore, among the thick pines that cast a heavy shadow upon him, was the form of a man clad in white. His beard and hair were very long, and were snowy-white, and the form was as still as a statue in marble.

"It is the ghost I spoke of; remember what I told you of the groom's death and Captain Moore's, and then I saw it the day the Surf Angel sailed, and this letter comes to-day. What does it mean, Captain Pearley?"

"I will find out," and he sent the boat quickly shoreward, sprung out, and dashed up the steep hill.

But the white form had vanished, and, as he returned to the boat, Lady Lucille said, sadly:

"It is the same form I have seen thrice before—the form others have seen and call the ghost of Captain Carl Conrad."

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A RANDOM SHOT.

LORD NEVIL was at a late breakfast when his special messenger returned, and handed him a sealed package.

"You have done well, my man, and here is a fee over your pay," and handing the messenger a gold piece, he lighted a cigar and turned to the letter.

"Fortunately Pearley learned to write a good hand, so I can read his letter without profanity," he muttered.

Then he added:

"Now to it," and he read aloud, as follows:

"MY DEAR NORCROSS:—

"Your letter caught me on the piazza at Elm Haven, talking with Lady Lucille, and trying to get up courage enough to ask her if she likes you more than she does me.

"I was a surprised and pained man when I read it, and at once suggested a row in the inlet, which Lady Lucille granted.

"Then, as you write good English, spell correctly, and, in fact, write a deuced good letter withal, I simply handed your letter to her to read.

"It hurt her, I could see, and she was heart and hand in for saving poor Conrad, and I rowed on up to have a talk with his mother.

"Before we reached there, Lady Lucille's quick eyes spied a form on the shore, among the pines, and she called it old Captain Carl Conrad's ghost.

"I rowed ashore to interview his ghostship, but it had flitted to ghostdom, and I'll take oath right now I was glad of it.

"Well, we were received by Madam Conrad, who is a lady to the manor born, and when we told her the ghost story she smiled sadly and said people often said they saw the ghost of her husband ashore and at sea, but the ghost never troubled her.

"Then we told her about her son, and she seemed to be deeply moved, but said she had such unbounded confidence in Cecil's getting out-of-a-scraps pro- wess, that she did not expect to have to mourn his death from hanging.

"Her serenity is charming, and her pluck is equal to her son's.

"She's the kind of a mother to have such a son, and I don't feel half so bad for Conrad since I saw her.

"Well, she admitted that he was a patriot, but was no spy, and would be guilty of no act of dishonor.

"She knew, too, about the brig's being a pirate, for Conrad had told her, and she thanked you, Lady Lucille and myself for our kindness toward her son.

"As to the old skin-flint, she says that Wethervane sought her hand in marriage, and was refused.

"Then he turned against her, and she saw him again after Captain Conrad's loss, and he again asked her to wed him, when she ordered him from her home.

"Since then she had heard he had been interested with smugglers, and had made large sums of money, for a poor seaman died at her home, who remembered her as a girl, and told her about Wethervane, whom he had known as a boy.

"The seaman's name was Dick Delmar, she said, so you might spring that upon the shark, for he said that the old merchant had been the secret owner of the boat he was skipper of.

"Drive the nail in on old skinflint and see if it will hurt.

"I have had a talk with Sir George, telling him I had among my dispatches news that Conrad was under arrest for having been a spy in the king's service, and he said at once:

"Then he is as good as hanged at the yard-arm, and he deserves it."

"So you see we can expect no help there; but we must get Conrad free if we have to bribe his guard to let him escape, which is what Lady Lucille suggests, and you may draw on my purse heavily if need be, for the funds.

"I wish I could send you some hopeful news, but I cannot.

"If aught turns up, I will send a special courier.

"Lady Lucille is a little blue about success, as she saw that confounded old ghost, which the sight of always brings bad luck.

"Now I think of it, it will be well to find out, if you can, just when, where, and by whom, the latter especially, Conrad will be tried.

"I don't believe in doing a wrong, but then if a lot of youngsters are put on the court-martial, why your promise of promotion, if they thought your way about Conrad, you know, would have good effect, and you have the influence to put them up a peg."

"Lady Lucille sends her kindest wishes for your success, and with mine also, believe me,

"Yours to command,

"PEARLEY."

Such was the answer to Lord Nevil's letter, and after reading it over twice carefully, he

jotted down the name of the dead smuggler, and then put the letter into the fire.

Then he went out for a walk, and his steps led him down toward the wharves, until he stopped before a large warehouse, over the doors of which was the sign:

"WETHERVANE & Co.,

"Shipping Merchants."

There was an office in one end of the large buildings, and into this went the dragoon.

There were a number of clerks present, and they gazed with both surprise and admiration at the gorgeously uniformed officer, and one hastily ran into the private office with the request that:

"Lord Nevil Norcross of the King's Dragoons wished to see Mr. Wethervane."

"Ask him in at once, sir, and don't keep a gentleman of his rank and wealth waiting, you fool," was the response of the rich merchant, and so the dragoon was ushered into the very comfortable private office and throwing himself lazily into an easy-chair said:

"Mr. Wethervane, I have called to see you about Lieutenant Conrad."

"What of him, sir?" and the merchant's sal- low face whitened a little.

"Well, sir, I do not wish to mince matters, so will tell you plainly that I am sure there is a plot on foot to hang Conrad, and the only crime he is guilty of is in being an American and hav- ing the pluck to come out and say that he is willing to fight for his country and not against it."

"This does not interest me, my lord."

"It does interest me though, and I'll prove your interest in the matter before I get through."

"Now you have a great influence over Ad- miral Chauncey, which influence in a nutshell is pecuniary."

"The admiral does not wish to offend you, and he has done a number of things to please you, which he would not, under different cir- cumstances, do."

"One of these is to listen to your charges and pretended proofs against Conrad."

"Lord Norcross! sir! I beg you to choose less forcible language when you address a man of my position, sir."

The young nobleman laughed lightly and re- plied:

"Mr. Wethervane, do not get angry, for it will do no good."

"I said pretended charges, simply because you have no proof, for I have seen all the accu- sations you handed in, as the admiral asked me what I thought of them."

"Now Conrad is an honest man and a splendid fellow, and I, and others do not intend he shall be sacrificed for your hatred of his father be- cause you were refused by the mother, do you see?"

"My lord, I cannot—"

"Ah, yes, you can, and I'll tell you just what I wish you to do."

"I'll do nothing, sir."

"You mean it?"

"The charges against Conrad are of being a rebel spy, being in league as well with Balfour the Buccaneer, and having entered the service of the king to betray his loyal subjects into the hands of the colonists."

"These charges are made by men who brought them to me, and—"

"At your request they trumped them up, for which they receive good pay."

"My lord of Norcross, such language I will not listen to, even from you, sir, and I demand that you leave my office!"

"One word more and I will, and it is that un- less you go to Admiral Chauncey, and ask to withdraw those papers, telling him—"

"I shall not!"

"Telling him that you have discovered that the parties making them are devoid of charac- ter—"

"I shall not, sir, I shall not!"

"And that it does look as though Conrad was really innocent—"

"Never, sir, never!" almost shrieked the man.

"I say, unless you do this, then I shall bring a witness who will swear that you are a— I refer to Dick Delmar, sir, the smuggler," and the officer uttered the last words rapidly.

With a groan the merchant sunk into his chair, his sal- low face now perfectly livid, and he in vain tried to speak, and held forth his hands appealingly, until really pitying him, Lord Norcross said:

"My dear man, don't be so frightened, for I will not betray you, or my secret, unless poor Conrad is pushed to the wall."

"Go to the admiral and do as I say, and all will be well; but if not, why then I'll meet you as a witness with Dick Delmar."

"Good-morning, sir," and the dragoon saun- tered lazily out of the office, nodded pleasantly to the clerks, and muttered as he gained the street:

"Was it Dick Delmar or his ghost that scared the life nearly out of him?"

"No, I guess he does not know that his old mate Richard is dead; but that shot went to dead center even though fired at random," and the dragoon laughed heartily.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE ADMIRAL AT CLOSE QUARTERS.

"PARDON me, admiral, but you look troubled," and Lord Nevil, in his free-and-easy way, looked into the face of the British naval chief with a glance of real sympathy.

"I am troubled, Norcross, and it's about what to many men is a light matter, but to me a great deal."

"Can I help you, sir, in your difficulty, for you know I am ready to do so?"

"Well, no, you can't help, I guess; but I will tell you what it is that worries me, if you don't mind, for perhaps you can tell me some other person to go to."

"I'll do all I can, admiral."

"You know that old skindint, Wethervane?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I have played a little too deep, and I owe him considerable, and he told me to-day that he is so persecuted by three Americans, who call him a traitor and all that, that he will sail within a couple of weeks for England, giving up every interest he holds here."

"I see, sir, and he demands payment from you before he goes?"

"Exactly, and I know of no other money-lender I can raise the sum from."

"I believe Wethervane discovered the charges brought by him against Conrad were untrue?"

"Yes, a lot of bosh, trumped up, he said, by his clerks, who hoped he would pay for it, and when they found he would not their consciences smote them and they denied what they had said was true, so he discharged the whole lot of them without a character, he told me."

"Served them right, too; but, my lord, what is this large sum you owe the old shark?"

"Two thousand pounds, to a shilling."

"Is that all, sir?"

"All! Now, Norcross, that may seem a small sum to you, but to me it's a fortune, and I am drawn up to date on my pay, and have not a pound of prize-money in sight."

"Don't trouble yourself, my lord, for I will lend you the money, on four years' time, payable so much out of your pay quarterly, and I'll send you the amount this afternoon, and my advice is to pay the old Shark and kick him out."

"I'll do it; but, Norcross, Norcross!"

"What is it, admiral?"

"What have you not done for me, and what can I do in return for you?"

"Nothing, admiral, unless it is to go easy on that poor fellow, Conrad," and Lord Nevil took his leave.

But within two hours a messenger called from the bank to bring him the money, and hardly had he counted it over greedily, when Sharp Wethervane was announced.

"Show him in."

And in he came, with the look of a man who was worried, and in a bad humor as well.

"Admiral Chauncey, I have come back again to say there must be some arrangement made about my money."

"I have decided to sail within a week, for certain reasons, and my money is all transferred to England, so I need badly what you owe me, so must have it."

"How much do I owe you—the actual loan, I mean—my dear friend?" and the admiral was as meek as a lamb, which only made the merchant bluster more.

"You know that you owe me fifteen hundred pounds borrowed, and five hundred for interest."

"Let me see, fifteen hundred, with legal interest for one year, which I will allow, though the time is five months only, makes me owe you just sixteen hundred and fifty pounds, Wethervane, so write out a receipt in full, and here is your money."

"Quick, do as I say, or I'll give you a sea voyage at the king's expense for charging illegal interest, and—"

"But, my dear admiral, I—"

"Begone, sir, or I'll hold you in irons as a witness to swear against Conrad, and if your testimony does not hang him, why then you—By Jupiter, but he's gone!"

"Hal hal! hal gone, and I am in considerable money that he would have made me pay as interest; but he got his ten per cent. and I saved the balance."

"Great Neptune! but how he is going down the street, and my opinion is that he'll sail even sooner than he expected."

"Now this extra money will just pay up my debts, so I can begin with a clean balance, and I'll quit gambling, of course."

"Norcross is a splendid fellow, and as he seems to want this Conrad affair over with, I'll just make out a list of officers and order them aboard ship to try him on the charges I have here written down against him."

"If they clear him, all right, and if they hang him, why then it will be a warning to other daring Americans not to be spies upon the king's men."

Sitting down to his table, after carefully counting the money he had left and putting it away, Admiral Chauncey made out a list of officers to serve on the court-martial that was to try Cecil Conrad.

Dispatching a young officer with the list, he

told him to order each one named to repair on board the schooner-of-war Sea Fox on the following morning, and report to Commander Jules Girard for special duty.

And to Commander Girard he wrote as follows:

"I have ordered the officers whose names I send beneath, to report on board your vessel at 9 A. M. to-morrow, and you are to call them together as a court-martial, before whom you are to try the prisoner, Cecil Conrad, now in your custody."

"According to the findings of that court-martial, for or against the prisoner, you are to act, releasing him and his craft if not guilty, and carrying out sentence upon him if guilty."

"The charges against the prisoner are sent beneath, and the proceedings are to be kept secret until his guilt or innocence is established."

Such was the action of the admiral in regard to the American sailor, whom a short while before he had been glad to shower honors upon, and in obedience to his orders Cecil Conrad was on the following morning brought before those who were to decide what his fate should be.

CHAPTER XL.

AN UNEXPECTED APPEARANCE.

THAT Cecil Conrad felt his situation keenly, there is not the slightest doubt.

Raised a poor boy, in an old house upon the iron-bound coast of New England, he yet had had instilled in him all the refinement of his mother, and his education had been far above the average.

As a boy he had enjoyed voyages with his father, and he loved the sea devotedly, while he was determined to pass his future years upon it.

The old home he loved well also, and its surrounding forests were most dear to him.

The little family circle was his home world, but the great world was before him.

A phenomenal swimmer, a natural sailor, possessed of really marvelous strength, an intelligence that was of a superior kind, while his courage was that of a nature utterly without fear, he had made of himself a hero ere he had barely launched into his teens, and so became known as the Boy Life-Saver.

Fortune favored him in a wonderful degree; but his indomitable pluck and will had always carried him through in the direst dangers.

A devoted patriot from boyhood, he had marked well the mutterings of a coming war-cloud, and felt that he would gladly strike a blow to free the fair land of America from the rule of a king.

Now, when the war-cloud had burst upon the country, with the Americans rushing to arms on the land, and fitting out their merchant craft as armed cruisers, he found himself in irons upon the vessel of a king, a vessel on which he had served as an officer, whose destinies he had held in his hands.

It was a bitter, a cruel blow to him, and yet he bore it with the utmost seeming indifference.

It hurt him as deeply to feel that Admiral Chauncey had so suddenly become his bitter foe, he to whom he had owed his rapid advancement, as it touched him to find how true was the friendship of Lord Nevil, Jules Girard and Captain Paul Pearley.

He could not feel that he had done any wrong toward the king, in accepting service under him until the war began, and certainly he had served his Majesty well while an officer in the Royal Navy.

But now, in double irons he found himself confined in his state-room, not only accused of having entered the Royal Navy as a spy, but of having been a smuggler and in league with the very Buccaneer from whose vessel he had made such a narrow escape.

On the morning appointed for the trial, the officers began to arrive promptly on board the schooner-of-war, and Commander Jules Girard was given the place as judge advocate.

Since the night before, his feelings had undergone a change, for he wished his own advancement above all things, and he had come to the conclusion that where there was so much smoke there must be fire, and so he did not wish to jeopardize his own position by clinging to a sinking ship, as he now regarded Cecil Conrad, so to speak.

"He served us well, I admit; but then his life was at stake too, and naturally he would do all in his power to save the vessel even though he was a royal spy on board."

"I must see how the feelings of the others are."

Such were the views of the officer who was to sit in judgment upon Cecil Conrad's case, on the morning of the trial.

The evening before he had been in sympathy with the prisoner, but he must no longer stand in his own light.

Captain Burnett was still laid up at Elm Haven, where he enjoyed the fat of the land, though his surgeon who was no longer in attendance on him, had hinted that he was able for duty when he gave up the case as needing no further surgical attention.

If he pleased Admiral Chauncey in this court-martial, and Jules Girard certainly thought that the admiral's letter to him appeared as though the young American was guilty, then he

might step into Captain Burnett's shoes in reality.

With such feelings it was that the commander of the Sea Fox called the officers together in the large cabin of the schooner.

The prisoner was then brought in, still in irons, and with a guard of marines over him.

He was cool, yet watchful, bowed in return to the acknowledgments he received from some of those present, and took the seat assigned him.

Seeing that Jules Girard was judge-advocate, he held hope of at least one friend in the court, for the others were unknown to him.

Then, just as the proceedings were opening, in walked with rapid step and excited manner, Lord Nevil.

He had received word while in bed, from one of the seamen on board the schooner, of what was going on, and he drank his coffee while he dressed and at once called upon the admiral, and asked if it was not a sudden thing, this court-martial of Cecil Conrad on that day?

"Yes, my lord, I have seen your anxiety in the matter, so wished to have it done with, and ordered officers aboard the schooner to try him at once, while I sent the papers in the matter containing all the charges."

"Of course they will do right."

"Of course, sir; but as you say, I am interested in the fate of a man to whom I thus owe my life, and I would like to ask, Admiral Chauncey, who is to appear for Mr. Conrad?"

"Well, I suppose he may select some one?"

"Have I your permission to appear, for I am pretty well versed in the case?"

"Oh, certainly, Norcross, why not, if you can spare the time."

"I can spare it, sir, and so kindly give me a line to that effect."

"Write it and I will sign it," said the admiral, who could handle a sword far more deftly than he could a pen.

The permission was hastily written, signed, and Lord Nevil hastened to the ship.

"Pardon me, Commander Girard, but I am to represent the prisoner in this trial, which has certainly been set going at race-horse speed," he said with some show of anger in his manner.

"And pardon me, my lord, but your name does not appear upon my list."

"It appears here, sir, and with the admiral's signature following, you will observe."

"May I ask when you received this paper, my lord?"

The hot blood rushed into the face of the young nobleman and he said sternly:

"Commander Jules Girard, I am not on trial, and permit me to say that I shall tolerate no slur upon my honor, sir, even by insinuation, as your question implies."

"I beg pardon, my lord, I meant not to ask an obtrusive question," said Jules Girard, who, with others stood in awe of Lord Nevil's influence and favoritism with the king.

The young dragoon bowed, as if accepting the apology, and took a seat by the prisoner, whose manacled hands he cordially grasped.

"You are a true friend, my lord," said Cecil Conrad, quietly.

"I try to be just, and this is a conspiracy, which has been forced upon old Chauncey."

"He fears that he made a mistake in appointing you, an American, and there is some underhand pressure that is being brought to bear to break you."

"I saw the admiral late yesterday, and he said nothing of this hasty court-martial being convened; but I'll do all I can for you," and with this Lord Nevil turned to watch the opening of the court.

The admiral, in his hurry with the papers, had sent the documents furnished by Merchant Wethervane, along with the rest, and these were arranged to be read also.

They were at once squelched, however, by Lord Nevil demanding that a file of marines be sent for the merchant, to insure his coming at once, and to have him swear to the papers.

In this he gained his point, for the other charges were sworn to and sealed in proper order.

In an hour's time the rich merchant came in with Lieutenant Remington, and his face was white with dread when he beheld Lord Nevil there.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE TRIAL.

JULES GIRARD read the charges against the prisoner, to wit:

"An American born subject of the king, reared as a sailor, and entering the Royal Navy for the purpose of being a spy for the rebels, with which treacherous party he is allied."

"Having, through his position as a commissioned officer of the king, gained certain valuable information detrimental to the success of the British service, he asked for leave of absence, and going to his home on the coast, sent back his written resignation of his commission in the Royal Navy, and asked its immediate acceptance, while along with it was dispatched a personal letter to the Honorable Admiral Lord Chester Chauncey, Commander of the Sea Forces of Great Britain in and about his Majesty's Colony of Massachusetts, in which he claimed to be an American patriot, or words to that effect."

"And again, the said Cecil Conrad did act as pilot

into port for a vessel that is known to be the Bluewing, an outlawed craft commanded by one Captain Balfour, an acknowledged buccaneer, and did pilot the said armed enemy to the commerce of Great Britain out to sea again, from under the guns of his Majesty's fort, though knowing her to be a lawless cruiser of the seas."

Such were the charges against the prisoner, independent of those which had been furnished by Sharp Wethervane.

These were to the effect that the prisoner's father had been a pirate, as was well known to the son, and that the latter and his mother subsisted upon treasure which the late buccaneer had laid by from his lawless booty, gained upon the high seas.

Also, that Cecil Conrad had been engaged in smuggling, and receiving stolen goods from Balfour the Buccaneer, and disposing of them to lawless merchants in Boston, Portland, and other ports.

That the said Conrad was known to be in the secret service of the colonist rebel chiefs, and was acting in their pay while serving as an officer on board the king's ship Sea Foe.

That he also knew the vessel he had piloted into Refuge Inlet when he had gone out to sea to bring her in, and, after she had landed certain lawless booty upon the coast, had taken her out to sea again to continue her career of buccaneering.

Each of these charges had been made by a separate person, whose name was attached and sworn to, and Lord Nevil said:

"May it please your Honor, I would like to have the prisoner tried alone upon the charges made against him by Admiral Lord Chauncey, his own letters and confessions, for this other alleged evidence can be set aside as a pack of falsehoods, as this highly esteemed American merchant, whose honor none of this court will for a moment doubt, knows."

"I refer to Merchant Richard Delmar— Ah! I beg pardon, my dear Mr. Wethervane, but I got your name confounded with another I had in mind."

"You will excuse me, I know," and Lord Nevil smiled blandly at the merchant, who had turned to the hue of death at the pretended *lapsus lingue* of the dragoon, in calling him by the name of Dick Delmar, the smuggler.

But Sharp Wethervane understood it well, as a threat, and he hastened to say:

"I am glad that I have a chance to explain those papers, for a number of Tories in my employ, who felt that they had cause of hatred against this prisoner, trumped up these charges to press against him, but, when I detected the conspiracy I forced them to quickly retract, and fearing prosecution, they have fled, so not one of the papers I handed in can be used against this man now on trial before you, and it must have been an oversight of my Lord Chauncey in sending them in after they had been withdrawn."

"I am no friend to the prisoner, gentlemen, but justice demands that I make this statement and withdraw those papers."

Jules Girard felt that Lord Nevil had gained a strong point for the prisoner, which he followed up by the remark:

"I thank you, Mr. Wethervane, for at once crushing and exposing this conspiracy against Mr. Conrad."

And to the merchant he whispered as he drew near:

"You have a great head on your shoulders, Wethervane, a great head indeed."

The merchant muttered a curse and hastily left the cabin and the ship.

Lord Nevil had overmatched him, and he was beaten.

With the charges reduced to his being a rebel and serving as a spy, and running the brig out to sea, when he knew her lawless character, the military court could readily grasp the situation.

No witness had been called, for none were needed, as there was Cecil Conrad's letter to the admiral explaining why he left the service.

Then there was the confession regarding the brig, which Lord Nevil had jotted down as Cecil Conrad had made it.

If the prisoner was really in the rebel service, while holding a king's commission, then he was a spy.

If he had taken the brig into the inlet believing her to be a rebel cruiser, and piloted her out when he knew her true character, then his act was as lawless as piracy itself.

So to these two points Lord Nevil directed the attention of the court, and the prisoner pleaded to both:

"Not guilty."

But, put upon oath he admitted his sympathies were with the American patriots, though he was not in their service, yet had intended to join them in the battle of freedom.

Several times was Commander Girard reminded by Lord Nevil that he sat in judgment on the case, not to prosecute the prisoner, but this gave the young officers present a chance to see that Jules Girard knew that the admiral preferred the prisoner to be found guilty, and it did not take long for them to decide as the judge ruled.

"Gentlemen, there is no necessity of trying

the other point, about the brig Bluewing, for you have decided that by finding the prisoner guilty as a spy, and all of us know just what that verdict means," and Lord Nevil sat down, while Cecil Conrad, without the movement of a muscle, rose and received his sentence unflinchingly.

That sentence came from the lips of a man whose life he had saved, and it sent the gallant rescuer to his death, to be hanged from the yard-arm of a ship of his British Majesty's Navy, which Admiral Chauncey should designate, upon a date one month from that of the sitting of the court-martial, and until the day of execution, the prisoner Cecil Conrad was to be held in irons on board the schooner-of-war Sea Foe, while, the acceptance of his resignation being refused, he was to be dismissed from that day from the Royal Navy.

Lord Nevil also took the sentence coolly, and grasping the hand of the man he had so ably served, he said:

"A month is a long time, Conrad."

"I tried to have Girard place it at three months, and I would have chartered a fleet craft and gone to England to place your case before the king; but he would not, and a month gives me no time for such a course."

"I will see you again," and with a cool stare at the officers of the military court, Lord Nevil left the schooner, and the young American went back to his state-room in irons.

CHAPTER XLII. THE RETURN.

Two days after the condemnation of Cecil Conrad, there were three persons seated in the lookout pavilion on the cliff at Elm Haven.

They were Lady Lucille, Captain Godfrey Burnett, pale-faced and wearing his arm yet in a sling, and the dashing hussar, Paul Pearley.

Their eyes were bent upon a sail coming swiftly along the coast, as though to make a harbor in Elm Haven, or the village on the little bay four miles beyond.

"You have good eyes, Lady Lucille, to recognize the craft at that distance," said Captain Burnett.

"Say rather a knowledge of the craft, Captain Burnett, for I have seen her in these waters for years."

"I believe you are right, Lady Lucille, it is the Surf Angel," said Captain Pearley.

"I hardly think so yet," Captain Burnett persisted.

"Why, captain, you the commander of the coast-guard vessel here and not know a craft so well known as the Surf Angel," said Lady Lucille.

The face of Captain Burnett flushed, for he was proud of his sea knowledge, and he said quickly:

"I have been an invalid so long, two months and a half now, that my eyes are not strong yet."

"Pardon me, that is the cause, for I cannot be mistaken in that little craft, as I have watched her go in and out of the inlet too often in the worst of weather."

"Yes, her young skipper is a desperately reckless sailor, and I am only glad that he did not wreck the Sea Foe, when he happened to be in command."

"I believe in gratitude, and all that, but to take a common sailor of the coast and make him an officer, I cannot understand in Lord Chauncey."

"But, Burnett, Conrad is not a common sailor, but a gentleman born."

"And what is an American, Pearley?"

"Pardon me, but a very fine specimen of an American is before you," laughed Pearley, and the discomfited naval captain said quickly:

"I beg pardon, Lady Lucille, I do indeed; but I referred wholly to real Americans, for your father you know is a titled Englishman, and at the death of his father will be Lord George of Elm Haven."

"And my mother was a real American, Captain Burnett; but let us not discuss this subject, but tell me honestly if you do not think Lieutenant Conrad has made an able officer, although an humble American?"

"You know that I have had no opportunity to judge, Lady Lucille."

"And yet when Lieutenant Conrad came home he sent over to you a correct copy of the schooner's log, at Commander Girard's request."

"Ah yes, true, and after some year's training as an officer, and genteel associations, I admit I believe that Conrad will make quite a man, for he has pluck, good manners, and is a good-looking fellow in his way."

"I consider him now, Burnett, the very beau ideal of a naval officer, for he is dignified, courtly, has elegant manners in fact, and no better officer than he is now ever trod a deck."

"I only regret that he gave up the service, but in this he followed his dictates of honor, and I sincerely trust they may not give him any trouble for doing as he has done."

"You are his friend, I see, Captain Pearley, and so is Lady Lucille; but though I admire him, and feel the deepest gratitude to him for saving my life in the plucky manner that he

did, I wish I could cancel the debt in some other way than accepting him as my social equal, and my brother officer."

"You hint at a desire to square the life debt by a pecuniary recompense?"

"Well yes, Pearley, I would like it so, but I am going to accept the situation as it is with what grace I can."

"You are wise, eminently wise in your generation, Burnett, for though I do believe I am a brave man, I confess that I have not the courage I would consider necessary to offer to cancel gratitude. I owed Cecil Conrad by a money offering."

"Why, if we stood here when I made the offer, he'd pitch me into the sea from this cliff."

"Yes, and then spring after you and take you ashore," dryly said Lady Lucille.

"Egad, but you are right; it would be just like him, Lady Lucille," responded the hussar with a laugh.

As though anxious to change the subject, Lucille said:

"You see now, Captain Burnett, that it is the Surf Angel as I said."

"Ah, yes, and she does fairly fly."

"Conrad's resignation has evidently been accepted, and he is returning home, I'll wager to enter the rebel ranks against us."

"I guess you are right, Burnett, and if he goes afloat, look out for him, as I will should he turn hussar ashore," and Captain Pearley gave a quick glance at Lady Lucille as though to question her as to what the return of the Surf Angel really did mean.

He returned the look, and both felt anxious, for what had been the result of the going of Cecil Conrad to Boston they could not tell, as no dispatches or mail with papers had arrived since the trial.

The Surf Angel came along with a bone in her teeth, for a fair wind was blowing from off-shore, and she had up plenty of canvas.

Several persons were seen upon her decks, but who they were could not be distinguished at that distance even with a glass.

It might mean liberty for Conrad, and it might mean the worst, the Surf Angel's coming home.

"They hold in as though to run into the haven on the starboard tack, which they can do with this wind," said Captain Burnett.

"Why not the inlet beyond here?" asked the hussar, for if Cecil was on board he would certainly run for the inlet, as the landing there for the mansion was very little further than the wharf in the haven.

"If he intended to go into the inlet he would have held further out, Captain Pearley, for now he would have to go off before the wind until opposite the channel, and then come about and beat through," remarked Lady Lucille, who well understood the maneuvers of a vessel that wished to make the harbor of Elm Haven or run into Refuge Inlet.

"Then into the haven she goes, for see there!" and as the hussar spoke the Surf Angel went about within hailing distance of the cliff, to stand into the Elm Haven anchorage on the starboard tack.

"Lieutenant Conrad is not on board," said Lady Lucille, anxiously, as she glanced toward the hussar.

"No; but Lord Nevil is," and, raising his voice, he hailed:

"Ho! the Surf Angel!"

"Ahoy!" came back in the voice of Lord Nevil.

"Ho, Norcross! where is Conrad?"

The answer of the British dragoon seated in the Surf Angel came distinctly:

"Conrad has been sentenced to death as a rebel spy!"

"A cruel, unjust sentence, that must be set aside," broke indignantly from Lady Lucille.

"The findings of a court-martial can only be set aside by the king, Lady Lucille," returned Captain Burnett.

As for the hussar, he was silent, but there was a dangerous look in his handsome eyes as he watched the little Surf Angel running on into port.

CHAPTER XLIII.

A FAIR PLOTTER.

LORD NEVIL NORCROSS sprang ashore from the Surf Angel, and, followed by a servant carrying his baggage, and whom he had engaged in the place of the treacherous valet, Parlez Vous, he walked rapidly on up the path to the cliff, where he was met by the three who were there.

"I am glad to see you back again, Lord Nevil," said Lady Lucille, extending her hand.

"Yes, Norcross, welcome back; but, this is terrible you tell us about poor Conrad," the hussar remarked.

"Happy to see you out again, Burnett, and looking so well. Yes, it is terrible, Pearley, about Conrad."

"He was guilty, without doubt, if a naval court of inquiry found him so," Godfrey Burnett declared.

"Naval officers are not all infallible, Burnett, any more than are army officers, and I was

certainly surprised to find men convict Conrad on the evidence."

"This is bold language, my lord, against a court," indignantly replied Captain Burnett.

"Don't worry yourself, my dear Burnett, into a relapse that may keep you from active service months longer just when your king needs his officers most, over my words about the court that tried Conrad, for I am always ready to be responsible for my words and actions."

The retort was a cutting one, and came in a dangerous way from such a man as was Lord Nevil.

And Godfrey Burnett felt its sting, too, but could not refrain from saying:

"I still maintain, my lord, that if a naval court found the man guilty, he is so."

"Why, Burnett, I should think you, who now stand here with us, instead of lying up the glen, yonder, side by side with poor Moore, as would have been the case but for Conrad—that you would be the one to deepest regret his downfall, and hope that there was some mistake."

"Be merciful," whispered Lady Lucille, as she fairly shrank under the stinging words Lord Nevil flung at the unfortunate naval officer, who had turned livid and writhed under their force, yet said:

"No one more than I feels for poor Conrad; but I was defending the action of a court of my brother officers."

"They are not on trial, Captain Burnett, and Conrad lies in double irons under their sentence, on board your vessel, there to remain for one month until he is run up to the yard-arm of one of the vessels of Admiral Chauncey's fleet."

"But I have dispatches for you in my sachel, as also for Sir George and Captain Pearley, in fact, I congratulate you, as I bring your majority, Major Pearley, and you are to have a larger command placed under you here."

Congratulations were at once extended to the young officer upon his promotion, while he said:

"It is unexpected to me, Norcross, but I did expect you to go up a grade."

"And I have, for the king in his kindness has made me a colonel," was the smiling response, and, after accepting congratulations, he added:

"I got permission to bring the Surf Angel home, or at least as far as Elm Haven, for I know of no one to run her into Refuge Inlet. I have a coxswain and two seamen I borrowed from your vessel, Captain Burnett, which, by the way, is to be here within a week or two with the admiral, who, I believe, is to be the guest of Sir George."

"Now I believe I can give you no more news," and the staff officer hastened into the mansion and gave over his dispatches to Sir George Harwood.

Sir George liked his adjutant, and more, he was anxious that there should be a match between Lord Nevil and Lady Lucille, for no one else came up to his idea of what a husband for his daughter should be in wealth, rank and family.

He found also Lord Nevil a most excellent adviser, for the young man always had sound judgment in other matters as well as military.

He greeted the officer cordially and after glancing over his dispatches said:

"In a letter to me, Admiral Chauncey says that this American, Conrad, was found guilty of being a spy and is to be hanged within the month."

"Yes, sir."

"And furthermore, he says that you took a deep interest in the man and defended him ably."

"I did take an interest, yes, Sir George, and I regret to say that it was a foregone conclusion that they were to condemn that man, for he is no more guilty than I am of being a spy."

"Well, it will be a salutary lesson to other Americans who wish to go into the king's service as spies."

"But you have done well, Norcross, and I am glad to congratulate you upon your promotion, which I here learn; and more, it will not take you from my staff, I am glad to see."

"Then, too, Pearley has been made a major, and he deserves it."

"The admiral is to visit me soon, for a week off, and I wish to give him a particularly pleasant time, so you must help me."

"Willingly, sir."

"Now I will look over my personal letters," and taking this as an excuse for a termination of the interview, Lord Nevil repaired to his quarters up at the fort.

On his way there he found Lady Lucille seated in a little arbor, book in hand, a resting-place between the fort and the mansion.

She arose as he approached, and said:

"Captain Burnett retired to his room with his dispatches, and Major Pearley has gone on to his quarters to read his, so I came here to meet you, Lord Nevil, to ask you if nothing can be done to save Mr. Conrad?"

"Lady Lucille, I have done all man could do, but in vain. The time set was so short I could not go across the sea, as I would have done, and place the whole affair before the king, and

which I know would have caused a falling of heads."

"But Conrad is in irons, double irons, confined in his state-room, on board the Sea Fox, which is to be here in some ten days!"

The last words were significantly uttered, and Lady Lucille said quickly:

"I understand you; but you, as an officer, can do nothing."

"No; I acted openly all in my power; clandestinely I can do nothing."

"I understand that perfectly; nor can Captain—I mean Major Pearley."

"No, he stands, as I do, as a king's officer; but—"

"Why do you hesitate, Lord Nevil?"

"I was merely going to make a very silly remark, which you are already aware of—you are not a king's officer, Lady Lucille!"

"No, and I can act. I thank you for the suggestion. Mr. Conrad must not die! Good afternoon, Lord Nevil," and Lady Lucille moved away toward the house, while Lord Nevil muttered, as he wended his way toward the fort:

"I thought she'd do it, and in a case of this kind a woman can work wonders."

"But Burnett is as ugly against Conrad as are the admiral and Sir George, and they all have to be watched."

"I cannot, as a king's officer, in honor break the law; but Pearley and I can talk it all over, and Lady Lucille is quick as a flash at a hint."

So saying the young noble went on to his pleasant quarters, an old farm-house near the fort, and there Major Pearley soon after joined him, and Norcross reported what had passed between himself and Lady Lucille.

"Yes, we can do nothing, our hands are tied in bonds of honor we cannot even stretch; but Lady Lucille is a fair plotter, or she never would have kept the whole lot of us dancing attendance upon her so long, and not a deuced one of us yet knows whether she cares a button for us or not."

"She'll save him, depend upon it."

CHAPTER XLIV.

A GHOST AS A PILOT.

COLONEL LORD NEVIL NORCROSS had made every endeavor to find some one who could run the Surf Angel into the inlet, to deliver at The Refuge; but in vain, for no one dared make the attempt even by day and with a calm sea.

He mounted his horse and rode on to the village, offering men there a liberal fee for the work.

But a crowd gathered around him, all old sailors and coasters many of them, and they all held the same view, which was expressed by one old salt as follows:

"Mister Officer, I was born some five leagues away from here, and I has passed out some sixty years o' life's cable, and I has yet ter l'arn o' but two men as could take a sail-craft inter that inlet."

"We allus concluded that there was no channel, when I were a boy, and nobody was fool enough to make the attempt with them rocks all around."

"But vessels have passed in and out in safety, my man."

"To be sure, and one o' the two I spoke of was at the wheel."

"They too allus ran in by night, for to my knowledge had Conrad's little Surf Angel is ther only thing that has been in and out by day."

"Why cannot I get one of those two pilots then?"

The crowd started at the question, while the spokesman continued:

"One o' 'em is a ghost now, and yer don't want no specter at ther wheel o' any craft, unless it be ther Flying Dutchman."

"I refers to Capt'ing Carl Conrad, whose body don't rest easy at deep-sea bottom, for its spirit prowls around the earth a-haunting his old scenes o' action."

"And the other, my man?"

"Are, we has jist l'arnt up at ther village, to be made a ghost out of soon, for he is to be hanged afore long for bein' a spy on the Britishers, and here ther boys come nigh, not long ago, o' killin' him for a traitor to Ameriky, Mister Officer."

"Well, in my opinion he was no traitor, and no spy, but a splendid fellow, and when I went up to Boston with him a week ago, two of those same assailants of his shipped on his craft to league with my orderly and servant to kill us both, rob us and run off with the Surf Angel."

"We has heard o' it, and that Bart Burnett were kilt, and Jack Nevins escaped!"

"Yes, he was allowed to go through the kindness of heart of Mr. Conrad, who permitted his escape; but I can find no pilot here then?"

"None, sir, for ther inlet, for if any o' us could pilot it, we wouldn't, seeing as old Conrad's ghost haunts the waters there."

"Thank you, my man, and treat your mates with this, for if it is king's gold it is good money," and with a laugh the officer rode on, while the old sailor cried:

"A couple o' guineas sure as I live."

"Come, mates, let us go and drink the gent's health, and afterward damnation to the Brit-

ishers," and with a cheer the crowd hurried away to the Golden Anchor for a drink, while Norcross, with an escort of cavalry rode on, for it would not have been safe for him to go alone to the village in the then temper of the colonists.

So back to his quarters rode the young Englishman, and he told Major Pearley the result of his mission.

"If I cannot get her into the inlet, I will buy her for a good sum and have her fitted up as my yacht."

"Did you visit the poor mother of Conrad, as you expected, Pearley?"

"Yes, I returned but a short while ago, and told her you had gone to the village to try and secure a pilot to run the Surf Angel into the inlet, and she said that you would be unsuccessful."

"But was she not broken-hearted at what you told her of her son?"

"She was strangely calm, Norcross, and seemed to hold an abiding hope in his escaping death."

"She is, nervy."

"To a wonderful degree; and more, colonel: I discovered that our fair plotter had been there."

"The Lady Lucille?"

"Sure."

"She is up to some plot, I'll warrant, and will keep it away from us, well knowing our position, and that, as friends of Conrad, we would be the first ones put under the inquisition of inquiry."

"You are right, we would; but you will go to the mansion this evening?"

"Yes, though it looks as though we would have bad weather again."

"So be it, if it gives us a chance to remain at Elm Haven Manor all night as guests."

"So say I," and the two officers parted, to meet again in the evening at the house of Sir George.

The wind was rising, and howled dismally about the trees, and the night, though there was a moon, was dark from clouds that overcast the skies.

The sea had begun to rise, and the roar of the breakers reached the ears of those seated in the parlors of the mansion, where a cheery fire of logs burned upon the hearth.

Sir George and Judge Hazel were engaged in a game of chess, Mrs. Hazel was embroidering, and from time to time joining in the conversation between Lady Lucille and her visitors, Lord Nevil and Major Pearley, and the subject was the war of course, while Captain Burnett sat reading the latest papers at a stand near and dividing his attention between the news and admiration for the beauty of Lady Lucille.

Suddenly all were startled by the sound of running feet without, and up the steps upon the piazza they came.

Major Pearley expected nothing less than that a band of "Rebels" had dashed in upon his fort, and sprung to the door, followed by Lord Nevil, while the others arose in alarm.

There in the hallway with the butler, shivering, dripping wet, were the coxswain and the two men left on the Surf Angel, and who had come down from Boston with Lord Nevil.

"Speak, men! what is the matter?" sternly asked the hussar.

"The ghost, sir, the ghost!" they cried, in chorus.

"Fools! what ghost?"

"Ab, major, darlint, it's the ghost of the ould Conrad, sur, whose body is un'asy in its grave because he died without praste or prayer," cried the coxswain.

"See here, man, what do you mean?"

"Quick, for I am in no humor for trifling," and Sir George strode forward and grasped the dripping coxswain by the collar.

"Oh, sur, it's Conrad's ghost, swate gineral, my lord."

"We was in the cabin, sur, and we heard a moanin', an' lookin' out we saw a white skiff a-comin' over the waters o' ther haven right towards us."

"I hailed it, I did, and thin, Lord love yez, gineral, we saw it was Conrad's ghost, and he was a-comin' aboard of the craft, so we all jumped overboard into the wild, ragin' say and swam for our lives, and to tell yez, gineral."

"And as we came over the hilltop, sir, we saw the ghost getting up sail to stand out to sea, my lord," added one of the seamen.

"Come, we will see for ourselves what this means," cried Sir George, and coats and wraps were thrown on, for Lady Lucille and her aunt would not be left behind, and the party started in haste for the cliff, the sailors following, and the Irish coxswain muttering prayers the while.

As they reached the cliff they beheld a strange sight.

The night was cloudy, yet the sea was plainly visible from the light of the moon, and a gale was blowing, the waves running high.

And there, moving out of the haven, was the Surf Angel under sail, while at the helm, standing erect, was a tall form in white.

"It's the ghost of Conrad at the helm," said Lady Lucille, and all stood in silence gazing upon the strange and startling spectacle.

CHAPTER XLV.
UNSOLVED.

To say that those who gazed upon the scene of the Surf Angel standing out to sea, as she did in the face of a storm, were not impressed, would be to state what was not so, for one and all of them, from Sir George Harwood down, did look, wonder, and yet feel unable to explain it.

The three seamen who had been on board the Surf Angel stood there, their forms trembling, their teeth chattering, and a look of abject anguish upon their faces.

To see if he could not trap them, Sir George said, sternly:

"You men were drunk, or have sold the Surf Angel, and tell this story to protect yourselves."

The protestations of the seamen came earnestly, and Captain Burnett remarked:

"I will say, Sir George, that I have perfect confidence in Coxswain O'Hara, while the other two men have served long and faithfully."

"Then what does it mean?" asked Sir George, again bewildered.

"Perhaps some coasters, wishing to cut the craft out, have played ghosts to frighten off the crew that were on her," Lord Nevil suggested.

"But could a strange man, and one man only these seamen saw, and we see now, have raised sail on the vessel and carried her out so quickly, think you?" Captain Burnett asked.

Here was a poser again, and Major Pearley remarked:

"I hardly think any ordinary sailor would dare face the sea in the Surf Angel a night like this."

"So I think," put in Judge Hazel.

Then all gazed in silence for a moment, and saw the little craft reach the breakers and begin to cut through them.

Suddenly Lady Lucille said:

"See if she heads down the coast, and then into The Refuge Inlet, for that will tell the story."

"What will it tell, my child?" asked Sir George.

"If—if, well, as to who is at the helm of the craft."

"That is true, for if she runs into the inlet, then there must be one man at her helm, and Lord Norcross, you are sure you saw him in irons?"

"The ghost, Sir George?"

"Blast the ghost! no! That American sailor!"

"Ah! Mr. Conrad?"

"Yes."

"Oh, yes, sir, he was in a condition from which escape was seemingly impossible."

"Wait and see," said Sir George, shortly.

Then the eyes of the party turned again upon the Surf Angel.

She still carried all the sail she had started with, and seemed to fairly fly through the waters.

Down the coast she was heading now, yet well out, and at the helm, as a rift in the clouds let the moonlight stream through, was seen the tall, white-robed form.

"The glass, please," said Lady Lucille, the first one to recall that one was kept in the pavilion.

Lord Nevil secured it and handed it to her.

"Father, you look first and say what you see."

The general did so, and after a long pause, said:

"There is no one upon the craft that I can see, except that man at the helm."

"Has he long white hair, father?"

"Yes."

"And beard down to his waist and white?"

"Yes, as well as I can see; but, he is clothed in white, too, and is a man of large stature."

Lady Lucille then looked, but simply remarked in a low tone to Major Pearley:

"It is the one I have seen before, and we saw in the pine woods on the inlet bank. Do you recall now that I told you I had seen him, and when the Surf Angel sailed there were three deaths on board?"

"Yes, I remember well, Lady Lucille."

"Now we see him again."

"Yes."

"And what will follow?"

"We must wait and see."

Another silence among all lasted for some minutes, and then Lady Lucille suddenly cried:

"See! See! She heads in for the inlet."

"Then it is Conrad, and he has escaped!" and all marked the regretful tone in which the words were uttered.

It was certainly true that the Surf Angel was heading into the inlet, and it was also soon seen that she was running the gantlet of rocks most skillfully.

The sea was wild now, and the foam-crested waves roared and swirled as they rushed landward; but the Surf Angel went driving along, held by a steady hand, for she never seemed once to falter, and as she swept in beyond the rocks, Lady Lucille cried exultantly:

"She is safe! She has run the gantlet of death, so who do you say now is at the helm?"

"Cecil Conrad, the rebel spy," answered Sir George, and he added:

"And no other."

"Norcross, come with me, and quickly. You

will excuse us, Sir George and ladies, for taking a hasty departure?" said Major Pearley.

"Breakfast with us, Pearley, and you, Norcross, and bring us what news you have discovered!" Sir George called out, and with rapidly spoken thanks the two officers hurried across the plateau toward the path leading down to the inlet.

They saw the Surf Angel just abreast of them, and driving swiftly along, so they hastened down the steep path to the shore.

"You intend to pursue, Pearley?"

"Yes, there is a boat there, and we must solve the mystery. I don't believe in ghosts and the supernatural nonsense any more than do you, but, we must hunt this spectral-looking helmsman to his den."

"I am with you, but, suppose it should be Conrad, Pearley?"

"The deuce!"

"No, Conrad."

"Yes, I understand."

"Suppose it is," and Major Paul Pearley came to a dead halt.

"What shall we do if it is?"

"We have not caught him yet, and I am not the man to give him up if we do."

"Nor I."

"We can befriend him and let him go, and then I don't mind dodging the truth a little."

"Nor I, to protect him."

"Then we give chase."

And springing into the boat they sped away, both at the oars in full pursuit.

The boat was a light one, the wind and tide favored them, and they went along at a slapping pace, while Sir George and his party had walked over to the inlet cliff and stood watching the chase with interest.

"Those are the two bravest men in the British service," said Sir George.

"Thank you, sir," and there was sarcasm in the tone of Captain Burnett.

"I beg pardon, Burnett, but I meant generally speaking they are the bravest, and my words meant nothing against you and the other gallant officers," and Sir George tried to creep out of a close corner, for he had not noticed Burnett when he spoke in enthusiastic praise of his two favorites.

But Burnett had the sulks until Lady Lucille came to her father's aid with the remark:

"Father said in the British Army, Captain Burnett."

"Ah, yes, so Sir George did; but I felt cut for a moment."

"It is my wound and long suffering I guess that makes me petulant."

"They are both out of sight, the ghost and the boat," said Lady Lucille, and as the night was chilly and the wind blowing hard the party adjourned to the mansion, where before the cheery fire they talked over the strange occurrence of the night.

But Lady Lucille in the kindness of her heart, had not forgotten the wet, shivering seamen, and had turned them over to the butler with orders to get them dry clothing and some supper.

As Spoons was anxious to hear the "ghost story" he was exceedingly attentive, something that was a rare occurrence on his part, for he was haughty to all except "the quality" as he called the upper strata of society.

CHAPTER XLVI.
A NIGHT VISIT.

WITH wonderful speed the two officers pulled on in chase of the Surf Angel.

They were both good oarsmen, and yet they could see, by an occasional glance that the Surf Angel gained steadily upon them, and at last she disappeared around a point of the narrowing inlet.

"Pearley?"

"Yes."

"She is out of sight."

"But this inlet ends a mile above."

"It does."

"The Surf Angel is not on wheels."

"Sure."

"She must anchor in The Refuge Basin, or else go over land."

"That's so."

"We'll go on, then."

"That's what I am out for to-night."

With this laconic conversation the two officers pulled on, but not with the same terrific stroke as before.

They knew that escape for the Surf Angel from the inlet, without coming back by them, was impossible, so they must find her at the head of navigation, just where the little harbor-age of The Refuge boats were kept.

Both officers wore their swords and a double-barreled pistol in their belt holsters, and they were not men to have any fear.

If several coasters had run off with the Surf Angel, then they would see who they were.

"The ghost, spook, goblin or man, or whatever it is, is obliging me very much, Paul, by bringing the Surf Angel just where I wished to have her," said Lord Nevil.

"That is so, if he leaves her there."

"We could board her in the narrow inlet here if he attempted to run her by."

"Oh, yes; but that white form at the tiller may take a notion to carry her on with him through the forest," said the hussar with a laugh.

"I hope not," and with this silence again fell between them until they rounded the cedar point and came into the little harborage in front of the old stone mansion.

The moon, as though to lend her aid, broke through the clouds then, and there, not a cable's length from them was the Surf Angel!

There she lay, quietly at anchor, her sails neatly furled and not a soul visible on deck.

"Pearley?"

"Ay, ay!"

"We must board her."

"Of course."

"You pull then, while I face the boat and be ready with my pistol."

"A good idea; but, suppose you hail first."

"Surf Angel, ahoy!"

The voice broke the stillness, for that far from the sea all was quiet, only the distant roar of the ocean and the sighing of the wind in the pines.

In the stone mansion a light shone, but no word broke the stillness.

"Surf Angel, ahoy!"

Still no response, and Pearley whispered:

"Try a little bluff for effect."

"Ahoy, the Surf Angel! Reply or I fire into you!"

Still no response, and so Major Pearley begun to row once more and Lord Nevil stood ready to board.

A moment more and he sprung upon the deck of the shallop, his sword in one hand, his pistol in the other, and Major Paul Pearley was at his back; but, not a human being did they see or meet.

The companionway door was open into the cabin, and the lantern within still burned over the table, so they entered.

Then, on the table, were cards, and this showed what the three seamen had been doing when surprised by the white-robed form that had driven them overboard in their terror and run off with their boat.

"Nevil, those fellows were frightened terribly."

"I do not blame them much, Paul; but, this craft lies here as serenely as you please."

"Yes, her decks are wet, but her anchor is down and her sails furled. Let us go on to the mansion."

"If you say so," and after a careful look over the boat the two officers entered their skiff and pulled for the shore.

They landed, made the skiff's pointer fast and started toward the house, Lord Nevil remarking:

"I hope that ghostly-looking sailor will not take a fancy to my skiff."

"I sincerely trust not; but, the widow is up, as there is a bright light."

"Yes, we'll knock and have a talk with her."

They approached the door of the porch noiselessly and listened.

No sound came from within, and Lord Nevil raised the heavy iron knocker and let it fall three times with a sharp rap.

A minute after a light appeared in the hallway and a voice asked:

"Who is there?"

"It is Norcross, Widow Conrad, Lord Nevil Norcross and Major Paul Pearley."

"One minute, gentlemen," came the reply.

The light disappeared, and, soon after, a heavy bar was removed, a key turned in a lock and the door was opened by Congo, lantern in hand.

"Lord! he is worse than the ghost," whispered Major Pearley as he cast a glance at the African, who bowed politely as he said:

"Misters Officer gemmans, walk in de libra'y rooms, whar missus be."

They obeyed, and Mrs. Conrad advanced to meet them, for she had come to regard them as her son's warmest friends.

Stately and very handsome she was, and her bearing was that of a woman of the world notwithstanding her long years of solitude.

"Be seated, Lord Nevil, and you Major Pearley, and tell me if aught has gone wrong with my son, that you come to-night?"

"Candidly, madam, we had hoped that you could tell us of your son, after what we saw to-night," Lord Nevil said.

She looked slightly startled and asked quickly:

"Did you say I could tell you of him, my lord?"

In a few words Lord Nevil told her of all they had witnessed and she was a most attentive listener.

Then she arose and went to the blinds, opened them and gazed out an instant.

"Yes, the Surf Angel is at her anchorage, though I meant not to doubt your words, by looking to see with my own eyes."

"And who brought her there, if not your son, madam?"

"You said but now, sir, that it was the shadowy form people hereabout call Carl Conrad's ghost."

"Of course we do not believe in such a thing, though, Widow Conrad, but in mortal agency."

"Nor have I ever seen my husband's ghost, gentlemen, though Lady Lucille, yes, and even you, Major Pearley, claim to have done so."

"I have seen that which I am unable to account for, Mrs. Conrad; but, by the Surf Angel running in to-night, we both thought, and hoped that your son had escaped, and we followed with such belief, hoping to serve him, and have him at once beyond pursuit."

"You are most kind, most kind, gentlemen, to my poor boy and to me in my sorrow and loneliness; but it is not as you hoped, for my son has not escaped, at least not yet."

There was much significance in the way she pronounced the last word, and her manner was by no means despairing.

Then she said:

"I will send Congo on board the shallop to see what he can discover," and the African was called and dispatched upon the errand, while Kaloo was ordered to bring a decanter of wine and glasses.

The two officers accepted the widow's hospitality, and drank heartily to the escape of the American sailor, when Congo returned and reported that the shallop was there and all shipshape, but no one on board or near her.

Then the officers took their leave, and returning to their skiff pulled slowly down the inlet.

"A lady, decidedly, Paul."

"Indeed, she is."

"And how cool she takes her son's fate!"

"Yes, and she has hope, I am sure."

"So have I after seeing her to-night. She is a remarkable woman, and you may be sure that the widow and Lady Lucille are plotting some game to rescue Conrad."

"I only hope it will be successful."

"As I do: but about that specter helmsman?"

"It gives me the shivers to think of it."

"Yes, it was an uncanny sight, and it is far beyond me."

"And me."

Landing at the place where they had taken the skiff, the two officers made the painter fast and walked slowly up to their quarters, both of them more impressed with what they had seen than they cared to admit even to themselves.

CHAPTER XLVII.

A PROMISED MERRY-MAKING.

THOSE in the mansion of Elm Haven did not pass a restful night at all.

The winds howled mournfully, the surf beat with heavy roar upon the cliff, and an owl who had lost its mate flew about in the trees around the home and hooted most dismally.

Altogether with the remembrance of the specter helmsman of the Surf Angel, the thoughts of those beneath the Harwood roof were too excited to bring refreshing slumber.

Captain Burnett had seemed the evening before to be more deeply impressed than the others, but then he was a sailor, and even in those practical, matter-of-fact days, it is hard to banish superstition from the minds of seamen.

Breakfast was never very early at Elm Haven; but half an hour before the time, Lady Lucille was up and promenading about the grounds.

Captain Burnett had seen her, and was hastily dressing, to go down and have half an hour with her alone, when he saw Lord Nevil and Paul Pearley join her, as they came down the glen from their quarters.

"Curse them, they are always in my way!"

"She can't marry them both, and yet she treats them so kindly, far more, it seems to me at times, than she does me!"

"How they can be friends, and both in love with the same woman, I cannot understand, for I hate them both, yes, and all who love her."

"I will not feel content until that American is hanged, for, somehow, I believe she cares for him!"

"No, I wrong her, for she would not prefer him, certainly, to me, or Norcross or Pearley."

"Moore was desperate about her, and I believe she discarded him the very day he was drowned."

"Well, he is out of the way, the American soon will be, and then I will have to get ahead of those two men in some way, by fair or foul means."

"Ah! there is Jules Girard, also; yes, and that old admiral, for he is determined to have her, and Sir George would not know how to refuse the old man."

"Now, I must keep my arm in a sling until after old Chauncey comes, and report for duty with it so, for it will help me in the Thunderer's eyes; but, in truth, I was well weeks ago."

"Now, what are they talking to her about?"

"Well, I need not be jealous as long as two are with her."

"Now, I would not wonder if all their friendship was put on, and each wanted to carve the other's throat."

"There, they are coming toward the house, so I will go down and find out about that specter helmsman, for I cannot make it out."

In the mean time Lady Lucille had gone out early, in the hope of meeting the two officers, and learn the secret they had to tell about the specter helmsman of the Surf Angel.

She had begun to believe, as her father did, that Cecil Conrad had escaped, and yet that form at the helm of the little shallop, was the same one she had seen in the forests, and in the sea off the cliff.

It was beyond her power to reason out, so when she met the two officers, coming to accept Sir George's invitation to breakfast at Elm Haven, she eagerly asked:

"What of the ghost?"

They told her just what had happened, and Lady Lucille was as much mystified as ever.

Certain it was not Cecil Conrad, for his mother would not have hidden it from them.

"If she knew of his escape," said Lord Nevil.

"Might he not have escaped and his mother not have known it when you were there?"

"Yes, it is possible; but he would have known us, and certainly saw us if it was he, from some place in hiding, so would have made himself known to us."

"Not if he feared he might place you in a position of embarrassment."

"There is something in that, Lady Lucille; but what are we to tell Sir George?"

"The truth, as to where and how you found the shallop, and that upon inquiry from the Widow Conrad you could learn nothing."

"But father had a dispatch by special courier last night."

"Anything of importance?"

"Any war news?" came the quick queries.

"Only that Lord Chauncey is coming to spend a week with us, and will be here several days sooner than he expected, and then he is going to take his fleet and crush the rebel navy, he says."

"That is good news, at least, Lady Lucille."

"Yes, Lord Nevil, if he keeps his word; but somehow I have got lots of faith in the non-crushable powers of these Yankee sailors."

"But father has decided to have a grand time while the admiral is here, for his birthday anniversary occurs then, and he will be just half a hundred, only think of that."

"Yes, and he will celebrate his half a century of years most becomingly!"

"So he says, and the soldiers are all to have a barbecue in the glen, and the sailors of the Sea Foe also, and father will have the officers of the fort and vessel, without exception, all take supper at the mansion."

"That will be grand, Lady Lucille."

"Yes, Lord Nevil, for father says that it will be the last time all can be together, as this is going to be a long and cruel war."

"He is right there, Lady Lucille, and I think all the officers and men will appreciate his hospitality, or at least we will I am sure, and what a belle you will be!"

"Oh, I shall not have things all my own way, for the gentry of the neighborhood, with their families will be invited and I suppose many will come, but others will not, for the bitterness between Americans and king's people is becoming more and more bitter each day; but father is up to welcome you, and I verily believe no one had a good night of it last night, between the specter helmsman, the wind howling about the eaves and a wretched owl."

"How did you gentlemen rest last night after your ghost hunt?"

"Oh, Pearley has no conscience and of course sleeps well, but I was haunted all night."

"By the ghost of Carl Conrad?"

"Oh no, by the eyes of the fair lady of Elm Haven."

"I ought to have known better than to question a dragoon," replied Lady Lucille with a laugh and the three ascended the steps together and were met by Sir George and Captain Burnett.

But the sea captain had the sulks at having been cheated out of his talk with Lady Lucille.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

CARL CONRAD'S GHOST.

THERE was one thing about Sir George Harwood that no one could gainsay, and that was extreme hospitality.

He was hospitable to all, and he seemed fond of dispensing his hospitality to all.

He had in his late dispatches, received complimentary notice from the king, and some of his speculations in England had turned out well, so that he was in a genial humor.

So it was that he determined to give a grand "blow out" upon the anniversary of his fiftieth year.

He made preparations for a grand time, and the four hundred soldiers, of all arms, now under command of Major Pearley, and the crew of the Sea Foe, which was to bring Admiral Lord Chauncey to Elm Haven, were to be given a feast, with no complaint of a lack of beverages with which to wash the good things down.

Sir George had requested that all officers from the fort, and ship who could possibly be spared, should come to the mansion for a dance and supper, while the soldiers were to be feasted in the woods near their camps, it was decided, and the sailors on the shore, for it was bright moonlight and the night promised to be a lovely one.

So arrangements were made for the great occasion, and the gentry scattered within three leagues of Elm Haven were invited, though few came, for the sympathy of the general's neigh-

bors were with their fellow patriots, and but for the large force near Elm Haven the feeling would have been more pronounced than it was.

But quite a number came, and the Sea Foe having arrived in the morning, the festivities began with the going down of the sun.

But in all that number how many were there who thought of the gallant American in irons on board the Sea Foe.

Whose heart bled for the brave man under the shadow of death in the midst of all the festivities?

Certainly the faces of neither the admiral or Sir George showed that Cecil Conrad was in their thoughts, and if Lady Lucille remembered the young sailor the smile on her beautiful face revealed it not.

It was a grand, a gorgeous affair up at the mansion, and joy reigned supreme.

At the fort, too, all was merry-making, the soldiers eating and enjoying the good things to their stomachs' content.

Down on the shore, among the cedars, the sailors were having a hilarious time, and while some of their number played on instruments the others danced upon the fine straw carpet that covered the ground.

The moon shone brightly, only a dark cloud now and then shading its light as it flitted across the skies.

The Sea Foe had her lights out, but she seemed almost deserted, only a middy pacing the deck and anathematizing his brother officers who were the lucky ones that night.

Amidships was a seaman on watch, and forward another one, and these were all that were visible.

A boat soon came alongside and a sailor brought on board some good cheer, sent from the mansion to the midshipman and the few men on watch.

The treat was a sumptuous one, and wine as plentiful as water, so they ate, the young officers on the quarter-deck, the men forward, until they were full to repletion, and more, they drank even more heartily.

Perhaps it was the wine, but their eyes soon grew heavy, and the men, with a glance at the middy, leant upon the bulwarks and went to sleep!

The middy, too, rested himself against the taffrail and his eyes closed!

Presently he started. Was he awake, or dreaming?

He must be dreaming, for there over the moonlit waters glided a snow-white boat.

It was under a small sail and came toward the schooner. At the tiller was a white form, with long gray hair and beard.

The middy had heard of the ghost of Carl Conrad, the old sea-captain.

Was he awake, dreaming, or was this really Carl Conrad's ghost?

He did not move, or was too frightened to do so, or to call out.

The boat glided alongside of the schooner, forward, and, horror of horrors! the white form came over the fore-gangway, moved along the deck with silent tread, and passing near the sentinel, suddenly disappeared in the steerage quarters!

How long he remained below the midshipman did not know, but it seemed to him an age.

Then the spectral form reappeared, glided back along the deck, passed the two seamen, who now also saw him, and one in horror was speechless, while the other dropped to the deck in a swoon!

Then over the gangway went the white-robed form, and noiselessly his white skiff, with its snowy sail, glided away.

Around the schooner it went, the midshipman and the one conscious seaman staring at it with eyes wide open, and silently away in the moonlight it glided.

It seemed, at one time, as it was passing out of the haven, to come to, but only for a moment, and then it sailed on once more, and disappeared around the cedar point out to sea.

Then a wild cry rung out, a cry of anguish and terror commingled, and the midshipman fell his length heavily upon the deck.

The sailor tottered toward him and called to him, while, from the shore, the boats began to come off, for that cry had been heard and at once checked the gayety there.

There lay the middy like one dazed, and the sailor bent over him, while near, seated upon the deck, was the other seaman, recovering from his swoon.

"The ghost! Carl Conrad's ghost!" cried the sailor.

"He has been here! he came from seaward and boarded the schooner!"

The men were in terror, the officers were sent for and the surgeon was told to come and see to the middy.

Then followed a search of the schooner, and the prisoner was gone!

His manacles were there, locked as they had been upon his wrists and ankles, and the port was open; but how had he escaped?

All asked the question, and the answer came from many:

"Carl Conrad's ghost rescued him."

When the news became known at the man-

sion, the gayeties ceased, and men in boats, men on foot, and on horseback, went searching for the escaped prisoner, while the Sea Foe got up sail and made a short run in search of the ghost.

The surgeon thought the middy answered at last; but he could only tell what the two seamen had already told, and no more.

At last day dawned, the Sea Foe came back to her anchorage, and all felt a feeling of intense relief when the moonlight vanished before the rising sun.

And there were some who felt a great relief from another cause—the escape of Cecil Conrad.

CONCLUSION.

LOOKING back from this date, kind reader, from what we are to day as a nation, and were then, as a people, it is hard to believe what changes a century has made.

The actors in that era are all gone, their bones moldering into dust, but the memories of them, and the romance of those trying times can never fade as long as the pen of the novelist portrays those scenes.

My story is told of Cecil Conrad, the rebel sailor of seventy-six, and yet to banish the cloud of superstition, let me say that "Carl Conrad's Ghost" was, in reality, Captain Carl Conrad, who, for reasons of his own, had long pretended to be dead, while he dwelt in the old stone house, his secret known to his wife, son and the two faithful Africans, Congo and Kaloo.

It was he, then, who had been seen as his own ghost, and he, with keys furnished him by Lady Lucille, whom Mrs. Conrad had let into the secret the day before the birthday festivities, had unlocked the iron manacles from the wrists and ankles of his son and set him free.

Whatever those most interested thought of his escape through his father's ghost, certain it was they found the daring young American a very real personage when he swept the seas as commander of a rebel privateer, and won undying fame, while the romance and adventures of his life would be a many-paged novel.

If Lord Nevil and Major Pearley were told the secret by Lady Lucille, they kept it locked up in their hearts, and soon after won new laurels in the field, fighting the colonists, while Admiral Chauncey one day found himself captured by the youth he had sacrificed as a rebel spy, and Captain Burnett had to haul down his colors to one whom he knew to be his rival for the hand of Lady Lucille.

And she, the beauty and heiress of Elm Haven, had asked her father one day why he hated Cecil Conrad so.

"Because he seemed to be the very man that would win you from me," was the answer.

And Sir George was right, for Lady Lucille did wed the Yankee rebel when the thunders of war had ceased to echo through the land, and Americans had won their freedom.

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